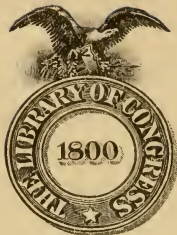


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ALCAR,
THE
CAPTIVE CREOLE;

A
STORY OF THE SOUTH,

IN VERSE.

BY M. ROLAND MARKHAM.

HOMER:
JOS. R. DIXON.
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TO THE READER.

THE Author, in presenting this volume to an appreciative and generous People, deems an apology therefor unnecessary.

His chief design has been to record a testimony against the Crime of American Slavery. He is aware that he has but faintly shadowed forth the dread realities of the system, believing that to truly paint the horrors and woes which are its immediate and legitimate results, is a task which human genius can not perform.

TO
HIS EARLY PATRONS,
THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,
WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF
REGARD AND ESTEEM,
BY THE AUTHOR,

P R O E M .

I.

Who are indeed, the heroes of the earth?
What names deserve remembrance? Who the men,
Whose deeds shall animate the mighty pen
Of Poesy? Shall they of royal birth
And blood, stand proudly forth, and claim
From great Posterity, that hallowed name?
Still, must the gory chieftain's name go down
To after ages, clothed with high renown?
Or rather may the man of generous deeds—
The man who for the tortured captive pleads;
Or may not e'en the poor benighted Slave,
That strives for liberty, the title crave?

II.

Behold the Statesman ; how he wields

His matchless eloquence !

And see a Senate ; as it yields

Almost without defense.

A thousand friends have placed him there,

A thousand for his bidding wait—

Of wealth he had the lion's share,

Perhaps 'tis wealth has made him great.

Behold the warrior ; he has come

From carnage fields in gold array—

Loud heralded by trump and drum,

While thousands crowd his triumph way.

Pale, starving wretches, who may camp

In dismal cellars, cold and damp,

Forth from their sickly dens, will plod,

And hail him as a demi-god.

Even the sons of wealth and pride,

With haughty look and lofty stride,
Will rear the proud, triumphal arch,
Then join with them the maddening march.

And shall the Poet—(soul of fire !)
Degrade his consecrated Lyre ?
Aye—shall the Poet wake the song
Of fame, for him who demon like,
Will lead against the weak—the strong,
With murd'rous gun and sword, and pike ?
'Twas so of old, and even now—
The conqueror with pride may claim
The laurel for his brazen brow,
The minstrel to embalm his name.

III.

Such themes away ! Be mine the task,
To lift from hoary Wrong, the mask,

To rescue from Oblivion,
The name, the daring deeds of One,
Whose spirit, tyrants ne'er could tame,
With frowns, or fetters, or with flame.
He is indeed the highborn soul,
Most worthy of the Poet's lays—
Who speeds to Virtue's shining goal,
Nor heeds the rabbles' blame or praise.
Calm as a river, on whose breast,
The tiny rose leaf safely glides,
Yet firm as the mountain's rock-bound crest,
Which braves the ocean's whelming tides.
He is the Hero, tho' a slave—
Who dares be righteous tho' alone.
He is a Hero, truly brave,
That wars for freedom, not a throne.
Not like the demagogue, who smiles
Alike on all, or good, or base—
Misleads th' unwary with his wiles,
Thereby to gain some higher place.

Nor like the conqueror who leads
 His reckless army on to death—
 To gain by sanguinary deeds,
 Base glory from the rabble's breath.
 Ah ! not for this, he loves the strife,
 He craves no warrior's low renown,
 No haughty monarch's bauble crown,
 He fights for freedom, and for life.

Like a minister of fate,
 Sure to triumph soon or late,
 Like an eagle soaring free—
 Spurning Earth's fierce raillery,
 Like an Angel when he brings
 Balm for human sufferings ;
 Like his God immovable,
 Tho' savage hordes around him yell ;
 Like a martyr dying—while
 Heaven receives him with a smile.

IV.

Then let the Bard his numbers wake ;
And tune his lyre to lofty strain
For him, who bravely strives to break
One link from all his tyrant's chain.
Well is he worthy of a song,
Who, in the midst of treacherous foes,
Demands a redress for the wrong,
Nor yields, tho' Hell's dark hosts oppose.

And such heroic deeds may claim
A glorious, undying fame.
And when long years have come and gone,
The Hero's name shall re-inspire
The sons of Earth—cheering them on—
Nor let them in the conflict tire,
Till Justice in her stormy ire,
Shall stay Oppression's threat'ning wave ;
And calling Vengeance to her aid,

Shall crush the tyrants who have made
Fair Earth a dungeon, and a grave.

'Then list the tale—peruse the page,
And trace a Hero's pilgrimage.

CANTO I.

A L C A R.

I.

'Twas morning in the South. The beauteous Dawn
Awoke from slumber, ere the stars were gone,
And left, as she was wont, ambrosial bowers,
To taste the nectar, of the new-blown flowers.
'Twas autumn: and the verdure still was green
As when it bloomed, beneath the vernal sheen.
In smiles she passed o'er Carolina's plains.

Scattering her dewy diamonds on the canes,
Which glittered in the rising sun, like gems
That beautify celestial diadems.

A day she promised, fair as that which shone
In Paradise—when Eve was first alone
With Adam. Gay the song-bird's voice did rise
Melodious, in anthems to the skies.
The while, cool winds arose and softly stirred
The orange leaves to music—rarely heard
In colder climes—till that delightful morn
Seem'd like the one on which the Sun was born.
So calm, so radiant, around, above,
That Hate himself was almost moved to love.
'Midst playful winds, and birds so musical,
It seem'd that man were happiest of all.
And is he not, in such a land so fair,
So bright, a land so lovely, everywhere ?
Ah no ! the fetter'd Slave lies bleeding there.

Columbia holds in Freedom's chosen clime,
Her sons in bondage—innocent of crime.

II.

'Tis night. Go ask yon swarthy son of toil,
What is't beclouds his brow—what wild turmoil,
What passion fierce doth rage his rugged breast,
And drive from it his Heaven-appointed rest :
Does he not note the splendor of the time ?
Does he not glory in his native clime ?
What mean those flashing eyes, those ugly chains ;
What mean those gashes—and those crimson stains ;
His fetters tell the story—he is bound—
A victim of the tyrant, and his hound.

Come Christian one, we'll trace his sad career,
In humble verse ; check not the willing tear
That flows in his behalf—for by and by,
Heaven shall sure reward thy sympathy.

Nor fail with an approving smile, to bless
The heart that weeps for those in wretchedness.

III.

Alcar, a Creole was : his land of birth
Was Cuba. Lovelier Isle was not on Earth :
But now alas ! that mighty Isle of Slaves—
Round which the dashing ocean ever laves
Nor purifies. Beneath a tropic sun,
The Captive's most eventful life begun.

In young Hispania born—where Summer reigns,
Castilian blood leaped swiftly through his veins.

In sooth, that he was one of high descent,
Might well be traced in every lineament

Of that dark face—a stranger once to tears—
Now sadly marred by the abuse of years.

The Muse sings not his childhood—days so bright !
The summer morning, of his winter night !

Nor will she here recount what hopes were his,
In later years ; when fancy's harmonies
Of coming bliss, were warbled in his ear
As she did promise him, a gay career.
Nor tell how bright, perchance, the future lay,
Made radiant by Hope's celestial ray,
But sing the scenes that memory sadly brings,
His servitude, his love, his sufferings.

The Captive's sire was noble—kind in heart,
Till passion ruled his reason. But the smart
Of an accusing Conscience stirred his soul,
When—penitent—he broke from sin's control,
And by the help of Heaven, threw off the chain—
Returned to virtue's paths, a man again.
But Death soon took the planter for his own,
And left the dark-eyed Creole boy alone.
No friend in this great world of sorrow—save
A dark browed mother—she herself a slave.
What wickedness, what direful tragedies,

Abound throughout the world where Slavery is !
There are no sins nor crimes, which foully blot
This Earth, that Slavery engenders not.

IV.

Time passed. A Slaver anchored in the bay,
Near which, the noble's wide plantation lay.
All knew the errand of the ruffian band—
To freight a cargo for Columbia's land.
They came—a crew of desperadoes, bent
On pelf, and plunder, of the innocent—
To traffic with the planters, for their stock,
Or kidnap victims, for the auction block ;
And crowd them in the vessel's hold, until
The ship is freighted to its utmost fill.

How many hearts were riven with dismay !
How many fear'd, at night, the wild foray,
Which oft the robbers made when thus they came,

A dreaded horde in search of human game.
Nor groundless were their fears, for many a heart
Was broken, as it saw its mate depart.
Alas ! full many a family did mourn
For friends, forever from its bosom torn,
By fraud, or theft, or purchase, dragged from thence
By men, all deaf to cries of innocence.
A month had scarce elapsed—when it was told,
The Slaver had five hundred in the hold.

V.

A playing on the beach, young Alcar went
As he was wont at eve : For oft he spent
Calm twilight hours, in sport, along the shore,
Sweet hours ! to return, oh ! never more !
Nor tho't the dreamer, it would be his fate
To be most rudely sever'd from his mate.
Nor tho't he that the vessel's pirate crew,
Were stealing down upon him—but 'twas true.

With vulture eyes they saw their guileless prey—
Beneath the rocks awhile in ambush lay—
Then as the jackal springs from out his lair,
So sprang the pirates on their victim there.
They laid a callous hand upon his throat,
And held him firmly in the ready boat.
Nor would they loose their hold, their fiendish grip,
Till they had reached the dreaded Slaver ship.
The Captive's cries were hushed and all was still,
Long ere the night wind had begun to chill,
And ere the morn, the Slaver left the bay,
And spreading sail, went on his ocean way.

Where slept the winds, that they would not arise,
And sweep the pirates from beneath the skies?
And let those poor benighted ones be driven
Upon some shore of Freedom—or to Heaven?
But there was left no mercy in the wind,
It bore them sternly on. Far, far behind,
Were left the loved. Oh, cruel wind! it laughed

Contempt, and onward bore the guilty craft,
Unheedful of the anguish in the hold,
Dire agonies, which never can be told,
Till Heaven at last shall read the bloody page,
Where He records the wrongs of every age.

VI.

In terror shook the orphan—when he found
Himself in savage hands—a captive bound.
That he was being borne from that dear shore,
Where dwelt his mother—lost forever more,
Ah! lost to him. At first, he wildly wept,
Then sobbed the hours away until he slept.
But yet, so troubled was his mind, he woke
To weep and moan again, the direful stroke—
Nor ceased his tears, till some one kindly spoke.
He caught the words of seeming tender love,
As quick as if just whispered from above.
They told him of a clime where he might play

With fairy mates, the glowing hours away.
That he would meet in that delightful land,
A company, more joyous than the band
With whom he sported on his native Isle.

Anon his dark eyes sparkled with a smile
Of new-born hope—when that sweet voice did tell,
That his dear mother, whom he loved so well,
Would come ere long and claim his quick release,
Would whisper in his ear soft words of peace,
And soothe his aching head and heart to rest,
Upon her own—her fond maternal breast.
The specious language calmed his soul's distress,
For in it lurked a winning tenderness.
Nevertheless he sat in dreamy mood,
For nought could charm away the solitude,
Which took possession of his soul again—
Bringing strange visions, to his aching brain ;
But notwithstanding all, he longed to view
That “happy land,” the story of the crew :

Until, at last, their most infernal scheme,
Became to him a pretty childhood dream.
He loved the words, nor saw their base intent,
And lapsed away in silent languishment.
And yet, 'twas strange to him that he should be
So rudely bound and borne across the sea.
And oft, when he beheld their faces grim,
And heard their frightful voices—every limb
Was tremulous with fear. Oft he would fain
Have burst away, and sought the mighty main.
Oh! would that he had leaped into the wave,
Rather than to have lived, to be a slave.
A pleasant fate to him—for death were gain,
Indeed, in contrast with a tyrant's chain.
But he was guarded with as jealous care,
As the hyena guards his cavern lair.

VII.

All dreary passed the second night. The morn
Still found young Alcar hopeless and forlorn.

For now the air came freighted from below
With accents, such as haunt the dens of woe ;
Until his heart, now almost crushed with fears,
Gave way to its distress in piteous tears ;
Nor would be pacified until the crew
Had told him that a port appeared in view.
'Twas Charleston city—mighty mart, where slaves
Find eager purchasers in christian knaves.
The poor man there is leveled with the brute,
And Liberty is but a prostitute.
Columbia's sailor, when he leaves the wave,
And treads her streets, becomes a slave.
Columbia's statesman, should he ever dare
Defend him—how he speaks, let him beware !
For Honor, Freedom, Justice, have no power,
Where Tyranny so long hath ruled the hour.

They neared the harbor boldly—for 'tis made
An honored calling, of the coasting trade,
To ravage every shore, and isle, and bay,

To furnish the demand for human prey.
The ship was moored—anon a flag on high
Announced her cargo to the passer-by ;
And ere the watch had tolled the hour of eight,
It had delivered half the human freight ;
Many, who just survived the direful trip,
In reckless haste were tumbled from the ship ;
And chained in gangs and driven thro' the city,
To meet with ridicule, and none to pity ;
Betimes, were locked into the nearest jail,
To wait in agony, the day of sale.
Soon may such traffickers from earth be driven ;
Such commerce well deserves the ban of Heaven.

VIII.

From first to last, the slaver chief had claimed
Young Alcar for his own : as he had aimed
To teach him all the arts of sea and land,
That he might join ere long his pirate band ;

Therefore he bade the Captive follow him ;
Who quick obeyed, shuddering in heart and limb ;
Nor dared he disobey him, or deny,
For fear (as had been told him) he would die.
But, lo ! the pirate stops in wild affright,
As if a demon rose upon his sight.
What was't that frightened him, who knew no fear,—
Not e'en when battle thundered in his ear ?
'Twas but a placard on the wall, which gave
A full description of the stolen slave ;
Off'ring also a large reward ;—he knew
Too well, the sordid envy of his crew.
Therefore he feared, (unless he sold the boy,)
That he might meet, ere long, with wild employ.
He only played the customary game,
And finding one, who from the country came,
He made him swear a quick return—then sold
The child, and pocketed the bloody gold.
We leave him now, the victim of a curse,
And pass unto the hero of the verse.

IX.

His owner was a trader : but his gang had gone—
Next day he was to follow them at dawn.
Meanwhile he sought his low accustomed haunt,
For a debauch before the morrow's jaunt,
And speaking with a frown beneath his crest,
He bade the Captive heed his fierce behest ;
But he knows not the language—yet he knew
Full well the import of his dreadful frown,
And then almost instinctively withdrew ;
And would have fled the presence of the clown,
Had not the ruffian smote him with a thong,
And bade him with a gesture, haste along.

Alas, alas ! for Alcar ; had he seen
The trader's character upon his mien ?
Ah, no ! for if he could have known him well,
He would as soon have followed him to Hell.
Could he have known the demon by his side,

He would have deemed it pleasure to have died.
For what is death to Innocence—'tis life—
Compared with bondage, where all woes are rife.

X.

Night found the Captive in a gloomy cell ;
His pangs of heart no human tongue can tell—
When first he felt the falsehood of the crew,
And found his dark forebodings proved too true.
His mother, he had learned to worship and adore,
Would never come—and he might see no more
That Island home—nor could he ever reach
Her shore, nor play upon her shelly beach.
Long hours he moaned, as on his mat he lay,
Nor ceased till he had sighed the night away.
At last, at dawn he fell asleep ; nor woke
Until he felt the trader's cruel stroke
Upon his tender form, his quivering flesh,
Seeming to wake his miseries afresh.

For once his mind was crazed—his sense did reel,
The cruel stroke he did not seem to feel,
Nor wept he as before—only a tear
Stole down his dusky cheek, when he did hear
A voice, he had already learned to hate,
Curse savagely because he slept so late ;
Then grasped the trader, in his yielding hair,
And roughly bade him for the day prepare.

Oh, stolen boy ! how sad, how lorn he felt !
It seemed as if his burning brain would melt,
When ordered forth, to leave the city—where
He hoped to meet his mother—come to share
His lone captivity. But now he gave
Up every hope—poor boy ! that aught could save.
But had the fires of hope complete expired
In his young breast ? ah, no ! one spark still fired
His soul with resolution to endure
The miseries which nought but love could cure.
Ah, yes ! his Spanish heart was nerved to bear

Its heavy sorrows with a lordly air.
Yet dreamed he still of that far pleasant time,
When he might see once more his sunny clime,
And dreaming thus, and hoping too—he bore
His griefs, like Socrates in days of yore.

XI.

But turn we now from his dark pilgrimage,
To one whose griefs no power could assuage.
Who weeps for Alcar's mother? Where, oh! where
May she find refuge in her deep despair?
What hand shall to her sorrows minister?
Ah! who shall bear sweet condolence to her?
In her crushed heart who pours the healing balm?
What voice shall bid her troubled spirit calm?
Was there no angel one in Earth or Heaven,
To soothe that aching heart, by tyrants riven?
Not one, not one! that mother wept alone,
Without a voice to mingle with her moan;

Without a heart to join in love with hers,
Without a hand to crush her murderers.
Alas! that no avenging arm was nigh—
No willing ear to listen to her cry.
No band to seek o'er Island, mount and main,
Her stolen boy, and bring him safe again;
Bereaved—alone—her brightest dreams are crost,
Alcar is gone! her loveliest is lost.

XII.

While coming from the sultry cane-field—she
Had heard the horrid tale. Most piteously
She wept—but soon was calm: nor could she stay
To rest—tho' she had toiled the livelong day.
One burst of deepest grief, and all was o'er;
Then hasted she unto the Island shore,
And sought for hours her darling boy—until
The pitying moon had climbed the highest hill;
Then left the beach and sought among the rocks,

In hope to find a parcel of his locks—
To her, a choice memento of her child,
That once prophetic on its mother smiled.
In vain she sought, in vain did she implore,
Of every one she met along the shore,
Some tidings of her stolen one to hear ;
But, ah ! no cheering word fell on her ear.
They told her that a company had gone,
To search the pirate Slaver ; and at dawn
They might return. Then thro' the solemn night
She wandered back, from sea to rocky height,
Till latest morn. But, ah ! no trace, nor track.
They found :—they brought no welcome tidings back.
But deeper anguish seized her heart, when told,
The motive of pursuit was only gold ;
'Twas not for sympathy with her they went ;
'Twas not to rescue her lost innocent ;
'Twas no such purpose bade the band give chase,
But love of gold—base motive of the base !
Alas ! that groveling love which bids depart

Each blest emotion, from the human heart :
And makes the man give up, a sacrifice,
His soul—a slave to every hateful vice.

XIII.

Meanwhile, that mother's mind was rent in twain,
A fearful frenzy fired her heart and brain ;
Thence she became a childless maniac,
Long hoping that her boy might yet come back :
Still seeking, night and day, thro' grove and grot,
To find her precious One—but he was not.

The while, what sufferings were hers to bear !
E'en weeps the Muse—to tell of her despair.
That they should drive her to the cane-field—now,
And thro' the sultry day, be forced to bow,
And labor 'neath the lash, till dusky eve,
Then wander to some lonely spot, to grieve
The night away ! It seems too base, ah, me !

To be believed, e'en by credulity.
Yet so it was ;—but soon they lost control,
So shattered was her frame, her heart, her soul :—
And when she bore the thong without complaint,
They ceased to scourge—too late ! the heathen saint.

Feebly, she wandered, every where, the while,
Often would weep, sometimes would sadly smile ;
Long hours would gaze upon the sea—and then
Would wander far into the mountain glen ;
Sometimes, a mournful strain of song, would sing,
In trembling accents, like the following :

My darling One—my precious boy !

Alas ! he hath departed :

They've torn away my chiefest joy,

And left me broken hearted.

I feared that I should lose him—when

They told me of the Slaver,—

They've robbed the mother—cruel men!
Of all that Heaven gave her.

They've borne him to another land,
Where tyrants will oppress him;
He's gone—where a kind mother's hand
May never more caress him.

I hear them curse my pleading child,
I hear the heavy lashes;
I hear his piercing cries—so wild!
I see the bloody gashes.

Alas! sweet Heaven; oh! pity me!
I've lost my loved—my only
Alcar—whom I shall never see—
And I shall die—so lonely!

XIV.

One eve, she wandered to a lonely shore;
She had been silent many days before,

Awhile in her accustomed paths she strayed,
Awhile she sat beneath the palm tree's shade ;
Then suddenly she leaped upon the rocks
Above the sea—and putting back her locks,
She sadly looked to Heaven, as if in prayer ;
(Perhaps she saw her loved One's image there)
She gazed awhile, then leaped into the wave,
And sank to rest—to be no more a slave :
The ocean winds arose that night—and bore
Her lifeless body to a rugged shore :
Next morn—upon the sands below the cliff,
They found the mourner's form—all cold and stiff.

So passed that maniac mother, to a land
Where skies are fair, and faces ever bland
As Dian's face, upon some summer night
When Earth is sleeping—dreaming of delight ;
She passed away without a comforter ;
She died—but there was none to mourn for her—
Save him, her dark eyed boy, but, oh ! in vain

He mourns, he ne'er shall see her face again.
Yes, died she ; shrieking his dear name—so wild !
A martyr to the love she bore her child.

Thus many, many die, in this bright land,
Where despots rule with sacrilegious hand :
They are forgotten, but their tears will speak,
And Vengeance in his wrath ere long shall seek,
And crush the men, who in their lust for gold,
Have brought upon the earth such griefs untold.

XV.

But where's the Creole boy—the orphaned one—
Left now alone ? Is he not quite undone ?
Oh, no ! for tho' the day was hot and long,
Altho' his frame grew weak, his heart grew strong.
There came a spirit to pervade his soul,
A spirit which no tyrant can control,

Who bade him bear his griefs without a word,
Sorrows at which a stoic would have stirred.

'Twas sunset, ere the dusky cavalcade,
Had halted 'neath a low inn's humid shade ;—
The gang was ordered to a filthy yard,
To pass the night. Alas ! 'twas very hard
For weary ones, who thro' the sultry day,
Had toiled so far—to be thus thrust away
So cruelly—but tho' so tired and faint,
They passed in silence in, without complaint.
Not so with Alcar. In a lonely room,
Beside the trader's couch he lay, in gloom,
Awaiting sadly some fearful doom.

XVI.

The gleesome lark, morn's tuneful harbinger,
Sang sweetly. Nature soon was all astir :
'Twas one of those sweet morns when Earth forgets

'The ban of Heaven—and man his dark regrets.
'Twas very beautiful—but what the morn
To Alcar now?—meeting with bitter scorn
Whene'er he begged that he might once be free :
And when he humbly prayed—(as fervently
As e'er a saint his supplication bore
To Heaven) that he might see his native shore—
He met with scorn ! Oh ! vainly did he plead :
'The lovely morn was nought to him, indeed.

But change comes o'er his fortunes—for at noon
The driver took him from his cell :—too soon
They reached an auction mart, a dismal pen,
Where Freedom's sons make merchandise of men !
Oh ! what a motley crowd was gathered there !
Some full of mirth, and others in despair ;
Some were pleading with their overseers,
Who, demon like, were laughing at their tears ;
Nor would the Muse describe such scenes of pain,
Where hearts are torn from hearts, for paltry gain ;

For now 'tis known thro'out the world full well,
To be the darkest picture—out of Hell.

Yet Alcar faltered not, but firmly stept
Upon the stand—and stood with those who wept,
Gazing intent upon each passer-by,
To see if he could catch one pitying eye;—
If haply he might find some kindly one,
Whose heart was not already turned to stone—
Who would take pity on his wretched state,
And save him from the ever-dreaded fate
Of being sold, to some ungodly boor,
Who lives by crushing Earth's defenseless poor.

Nor look, nor tear he saw, nor voice he heard;
Not one dare breathe a sympathizing word;
He looked in vain around the dingy hall,
For not a friend he finds among them all.
And he would fain have lain him down to die,

Had not fair Hope (best angel from on high)
Appeared, and lighted up his tearful eye :
Silent he leaned against a cotton bale,
Awaiting patiently the hour of sale :
But Heaven had marked a better destiny
For him, than gloomy fate would fain decree.

XVII.

A noble planter, (in his kind employ)
Beheld with sympathy the Cuban boy ;
And seeing a nobleness upon his mien,—
A brilliant look, he had but rarely seen,
The Captive's history he fain would hear :
Anon, by questioning the auctioneer,
And learning that the Creole was alone,
He spake to him in kind, paternal tone.
A few words passed—and soon the generous man
Redeemed the Captive, ere the sale began :
And moving quickly where dark Alcar stood,

He loosed his bands, before the multitude ;
Who wondered as he took him by the hand,
And led him tenderly from off the stand ;
Then kindly placed him in his coach, and drove
A few miles westward to a stately grove :
Which on a gentle eminence arose
To view—just at day's delightful close.

XVIII.

In grandeur stood the Planter's mansion ; large
And elegant, upon a river's marge ;
A noble structure—in baronial style—
Of stone, full turreted, and roofed with tile ;
Fine, spacious halls, in summer light and cool—
With niches graced by statues beautiful :
High, gothic windows, finished but to please,
Shaded without by rose-clad trellisses,
As fragrant as those fam'd Cashmerean bowers,
Where Earth is but a wilderness of flowers ;

Long, airy porticos, from whence the eye
Could wander o'er the landscape leisurely,
And gaze with rapture on the lovely scene,
Made radiant by the sun's resplendent sheen ;
Nor could the eye in one excursive glance,
E'er find on Earth a pleasanter expanse :
E'en to the water's edge, were lawns as green
As emerald—with flower parterres between.
A park, where Art had swayed a magic wand,
With fields and woodlands lying far beyond :
Rich gardens—with their fruits and flowers—
And here and there inviting arbor'd bowers,
Forever fresh and fragrant—built for those,
Who haply sought their quiet, for repose ;
Native, exotic, ornamental trees,
With rustic seats for leisure and for ease ;
Broad avenues down to the river led,
With famed Magnolias blooming overhead ;
From whence cool walks went winding left and right,
All paved with polished pebbles, snowy white ;

And fringed with sea-shells, made of rainbow light.
'Twas Paradise unto the birds—their lays
Were warbled heavenward in purest praise.
And many a fountain from fair Dawn's awaking,
Ne'er ceased a moment from its rainbow making—
Playing with stars long ere the day begun,
Then tossing silver flowers in the sun.
Fit place, where Virtue's votaries might dwell,
With nought but Innocence for sentinel,
Wer't not for Slavery, which ever brings
A curse on Earth and all delightful things.

XIX.

Such was the Planter's princely country seat ;
In sooth it was a beautiful retreat :
Such was the home which Alcar found at eve,
And he, poor boy, had long ere ceased to grieve ;
For when he heard the words of kindness spoken,
He grieved no more—his manacles were broken.

And now, altho' he sadly mourned for those
Behind—he fain forgot his former woes ;
And gazed, with almost reverential awe,
Upon his masters face—for there he saw
True pity beaming from his eyes, which told
That he was kind, and good, and noble souled.
Meanwhile, he tho't he never would depart,
And leave alone so generous a heart ;
And oft resolved a trusty slave to be,
And serve thro' life his master faithfully ;
For now he seemed a god compared with those,
Who heretofore had robbed him of repose.

XX.

Thus passed the day—anon the sunset time
Came on—lovely on Earth—above sublime ;
Nature brought forth her each divinest hue,
And painted all the landscape over new ;
Till park and woodland, grove and garden seemed

As fair a scene as e'er the Muses dreamed.
The coach wheeled in upon the carriage way,
Just as the setting sun's departing ray
Shone splendid on each turret, tower and tree,
Arraying them in golden drapery.
Kind servants greeted them with smiles of joy,
And looked with interest on the stranger boy ;
They welcomed them in terms of elegance,
And eager seemed their comforts to enhance,
Showing that gentle treatment was not lost
On them, but doubly paid the trifling cost ;
And proving, too, that kindly words expressed
Will waken gratitude in every breast.

XXI.

A bliss is woven now, in Alcar's fate ;
A home he finds, with friends commensurate ;
His master soon a guardian became
To him—for oft it seemed his chiefest aim,

To soothe the sorrows of the comfortless,
And shed round many a hearth domestic bliss ;
Altho' to follow Custom was inclined,
In nature he was generous and kind.

That night the Captive found a sweet repose,
Beneath his master's roof. No fear of foes
Disturbed him there—but many pleasant dreams,
Of Cuban loveliness had he—yea, many gleams
Of beauty, came athwart his slumbering vision,
Making that night of rest almost elysian.
Yes—Heav'n bestowed upon the slave boy rest,
And calmed the painful throbbings of his breast ;
Like, when an angel on the Earth reposes,
All innocent within a bower of roses.

Sleep, stolen boy ! but thou shalt wake at dawn,
And meet a playmate sprightly as the fawn

That skips the Planter's groves. Oh ! rest the while
In peace, and 'bide the morning's fairest smile.

CANTO II.

CORLAY.

I.

Come ! listen we now to the Muse's lay,
Which she sings with delight of the fair Corlay ;
The Planter's pride, the beloved of all
That linger'd in summer at Greenwood Hall ;
As bright as a rising star was he,
With a form of unequalled symmetry ;
With an eye expressive, and large and blue,
And a heart within as an angel's true ;
Fell light brown locks of a partial curl ,
O'er a brow as pure as a silver pearl ;
With a face all beaming with gentleness,

And winning from all a loving caress.
Aye, such was he in his thirteenth summer,
When he greeted Alcar, the Spaniard comer.
This sprightly verse is the Muse's lay,
Which she sings of the fair—the gentle Corlay.

II.

The morning smiled : It was a brilliant one,
When first young Alcar met the Planter's son,
His senior by two years. A morn of Hope
To him—as bright as if great Heaven should ope
The portals of the skies, and hither send
A holy One, to be the slave-boy's friend.
Corlay had heard of him the eve before ;
He wished to see the stranger from the shore
Of Cuba. Stories of his griefs had won
His pity. Long before the regal sun
Had left his orient couch, he hastened where
The Captive slept, and called him forth to share

His morning sports. Soon came he, newly clad
In garments and in smiles, his heart was glad.
They met: The dark hued child of grief and shame,
With him, the son of opulence and fame.
They met, he of the raven, curling hair,
With one benign, benevolent and fair.
And from hence-forward they were loving friends,
Wedded by ties which Fate nor Fortune rends.

III.

“O! come with me,” said the blithe Corlay,
“We’ll go to the river banks and play;
“We’ll linger there on the shore, until
“The sun hath glanced o’er the distant hill;
“We’ll go and bathe in the limpid pond,
“And rove awhile in the woods beyond;
“We’ll then return to the garden bowers,
“And pluck bouquets of the bright-hued flowers;
“Or sit in the shade thro’ the noontide heat,
“And taste the oranges, cool and sweet.

“Come, Alcar, come! O, hasten away,
“For to-day is mine for a holiday.”
Soon each flew away like a joyous bird,
And many a shout and a laugh was heard,
As they climbed the tall Magnolia trees,
Or frolicked about ’mong the shrubberies.
Like lambs they played thro’ the golden days,
Like larks they sang their innocent lays;
At eve returned to the Planter’s Hall,
To meet the smile and caress of all.

IV.

Alcar anon received his tasks, which were
To irrigate, betimes, a rich parterre;
To go on errands at his master’s call,
Bring letters from the post to Greenwood Hall,
To hold in readiness the restive steed,
Nor miss at morn the beauteous birds to feed,
To visit now and then the garden gay

And gather flowers for the rich bouquet,
To linger near the Planter's rich alcove,
Nor leave without permission Greenwood grove.

Thus were his tasks but few, nor were they hard—
He had his sports, nor yet was he debarred
From kind Corlay. Oft times the dreamers went
Down to the river's mossy marge, and spent
Fine afternoons in angling leisurely,
Or sailing in some shallop, full of glee.
In sooth a thousand pleasures seemed in store
For him—no time e'er passed so sweet before
As years drew on, however, busy thought
Would dwell upon the truth—he toiled for nought.
And though a favorite in the mansion—still
He was a subject of the Planter's will.
And oft as youth approached, a loneliness
Would settle o'er his mind, seeming to press
His heart to bursting, when, as oft he thought

Of that lost mother, never yet forgot,
Or that loved Isle, or that ferocious band,
Which tore him from his own—his native land.
But yet, so many seemed his pleasures and so kind
His friends—he felt in part secure. Resigned
To meet the fate that Heaven might ordain,
And bear with manly fortitude the chain.

V.

Thus passed his youth with little trouble, save
The crushing consciousness—he was a slave!
Passed thus his earlier years of servitude,
Till he was quite nineteen. Graceful he stood,
A tall, athletic youth, so promising,
It seemed almost that he might safely fling
The gauntlet forth to grim Disease, and call
Old Fate to do his worst, and over all
Be conqueror. A dark commanding mien
Was his, lit by an eye of Arab sheen,

Not like the Indian's—dull and mute and cold,
But brightly Spanish, of Castilian mold.
Slavery not yet had drowned in agony
His soul, nor even dimmed his lustrous eye.

Meanwhile, the friendship of Corlay was sweet ;
Time spent with him was happiness complete.
This made his thralldom easy to be borne,—
Bereft of his loved presence, he would mourn,
As if nor power of Heaven, nor human aid,
Could fill the vacancy his absence made.
But they must part ; the almost brothers—now
Must suffer separation ; ah, me ! how
Sorrow did rend the Captive's breast, when first
Upon his ear the dreadful tidings burst.

VI.

One summer eve—it was a sultry hour,
When they, returning from a pleasure ride,

Upon the river, sought their usual bower,
And there alone, reclining side by side,
Began conversing of events gone by.

Thus while they sat together—with a sigh
Corlay of his departure spake. “The time
“Has come, when I must leave my native clime,
“To drink at wisdom’s founts, in other lands—
“And leave my captive friend. Oh! that thy bands
“Were broken, and thy fettered limbs were freed,
“That thou might’st go. ’Tis vain I intercede
“My sire for thee; our fortunes are decreed.”
“Oh! say not so—it cannot—must not be,”
Cried Alcar—“thou shalt ne’er be torn from me.
“What! leave me here? ’twould rend my very heart,
“For of my soul thou art the better part:
“Oh! do not—do not heed the call, but stay—
“My only friend on earth—my dear Corlay.”

“Alcar! stern duty calls and I must heed;
“That I should go, there is the utmost need:

“Thou know’st full well that Tyranny is rife
“On earth, and I must meet the coming strife ;
“Nor longer in the lap of luxury
“Abide, but seek some country of the Free ;
“There learn to grapple with a sterner fate,
“To be more manly—less effeminate ;
“That when the conflict opens, I may be
“A guard, a champion of Liberty.
“But linger thou—be patient and be pure ;
“Awhile thy chains with fortitude endure ;
“Be cheerful still—mourn not too much for me,
“For in my absence there is hope for thee.
“And, oh ! forget me not—remember well
“The lessons thou hast heard—but never tell
“Who taught them thee ; ah, no ! for if thou dost,
“There’s danger that some mean, malignant host
“May consummate our ruin. Strive to earn
“Regard ; be faithful thou till I return.”

VII.

Anon, Corlay did leave his southern home,
To seek some northern college—or to roam
In foreign lands awhile. But long before,
Had sowed in Alcar's breast the germs of lore ;
Had led him to the fount of knowledge, where
He tasted once, and loved to linger there.
And now Corlay was gone, a burning thirst
Came o'er him till, he would have gladly burst
The bonds which held him fast, and sought to be
His willing slave to all eternity.
Corlay's entrancing words, in sooth inspired
His young imagination, and refired
His breast with love of Liberty. Yet, still
He struggled on, perhaps but to fulfill
His fate. Like some stern son of fame, he strove,
Seeking at eve a covert in the grove ;
There, while the generous Moon gave her soft light,
He passed full many a studious hour at night,

Reading the books which he had garnered there,
As safe, as if they charmed away despair.

Forsaken Captive ! and was he bereft
Of all ? Oh, no ! his manhood still was left.
But yet, he yearned for some dear, kindred heart,
To bid his painful solitude depart.

VIII.

Passed away Summer ; when one Autumn day,
Returned the good, the noble-souled Corlay.
From travel he had come, and he had been
Beyond the sea. Many a wondrous scene
Had gazed upon—at many a holy shrine
Had worshiped, as they were indeed divine.
And he had visited the mighty Isle
Of Britain ; seen her glorious works the while.
And basking in the smile of nobles—saw
Her millions writhing 'neath the cruel law

Of caste ; and as he heard their sighs, would fain
Have lifted them to manhood once again.

Anon upon the Seine he sailed—and stood
In Fashion's proud metropolis. Nor could
His philanthropic nature fail to grieve
For thousands, he was powerless to relieve :
Those noble sons of France, who fell a prey
To proud Ambition's sanguinary sway ;
For scores of her unhappy citizens,
Who pined in chains, in humid Bastile dens ;
But prayed for that period when Gaul
Should consummate the proud Usurper's fall.

From thence to vine-clad Italy he went,
And mused by many a mighty monument
Of ancient ages—till he saw their prime
Untouched—unshattered by the shocks of Time :
Pensive he paced the polished pave of Rome,

And stood enchanted 'neath the sky-like dome
Of Peter—gazing round in solemn awe
Upon the silent galleries, till he saw
Them living with the Dead, whose charnel home
Is but the ashes of reposing Rome.
Nor could withstand his sadness, as he viewed
Her silent streets, a desert solitude!
Where are the millions who inhabited
The “eternal city?”—“numbered with the dead.”
Down to Oblivion's charnel shades are thrust,
To mingle with their fallen Empire's dust.

He stands within the famed Coliseum,
And muses o'er its crumbling wall. Tho' dumb
It tells the tale of Earth's primeval ban;
It speaks the mournful destiny of Man.
And there he saw Italia's sons enslaved,
And heard the sorrowing millions as they raved,
Beneath the scepter of a bigot Pope—
While doomed in Superstition's maze to grope;

Beheld them start as from a death-like trance,
From out the rayless night of Ignorance,
And with Mazzini in the van, advance—
Whose eloquence, whose spirit-stirring words,
Adjured them buckle on their sleeping swords,
And drive away the mercenary hordes,
That stole their Liberty, and made them slaves.
They struggled all in vain! Those peasant braves,
Were scattered, as the whirlwind's chilly breath
Scatters the leaves—were given up to death.
Alas! Mazzini fled across the wave,
An exile from the land he sought to save.

IX.

But scenes of strife were still to meet his eyes,
For he beheld the crushed Hungarians rise,
And fling their tri-hued banners to the skies,
Their fetters to the Earth—then grasp the shield,
The lance and sword, and seek the crimson field.

There rushing to the battle, with a shout,
They drive for once the Austrian menials out ;
Yet but for once ; for fiendish Treachery
Betrayed the hopeful legions of the Free.
In vain, in accents winsome as a lute,
Breathed forth his eloquence, the great Kossuth ;
In vain, he pointed to the sainted slain,
Bidding the Magyars rally once again.
In vain he pointed to their Fathers' bones,
And bade them guard their monumental stones :
In vain he led them to their pleading graves.
They rallied not, but sank a race of slaves !
They cried unto the Nations at their fall,
But there was none to listen to the call.
The Crowns of Europe joined to crush the free—
The patriotic hearts of Hungary.
The Magyar and the poor Italian,
Must struggle on, till Heaven removes the ban
Which rests on Earth, and bids her millions rise,
And grasp the priceless, long-withholden prize—

Which Kings and Popes and Priests have madly
striven,
To keep from Man Immortal—Child of Heaven !

X.

Corlay beheld it all ; his nature yearned ;
The fires of Freedom in his bosom burned ;
And as he sought his own beloved shore,
Eternal enmity to Wrong he swore.
And when he gazed upon Columbia's plains—
Beheld her bondmen writhing in their chains,
His heart was moved to pity, and he gave
His energies, his life, to free the slave ;
And fired with zeal, he hastens homeward now,
To seek his duty and fulfill his vow.

And now they meet, the youths, who long before
Had sworn eternal friendship. But no more
They stood as erst, for Virtue's true impress

Had stamped their brows with all the nobleness
Of manhood. The One, the noble, dark-browed
slave,

The other, fair, benevolent and brave.
And, oh ! how fondly they embraced ; from hearts
Like theirs fraternal friendship ne'er departs.

Long hours, that night, they pleasantly conversed,
And many were the incidents rehearsed :
Both breathed their secret hopes and fears, until
Their mutual hearts were linked more closely still.
A holy confidence composed their bliss,
Unshaken by a purblind prejudice.

XI.

There is no mail coach for the slave, so low !
No post for him—and he may never know
Where his dear friend has gone ; tho' far above
All human thought, his constant heart may love.

'Twas so with Alcar: Still the kind Corlay
Had fondly tho't of him, tho' far away.
And while he knew the longings of his soul
For Liberty, Corlay could not control
His rising sympathy, but often gave
Assurance of his willingness to save.

“ Oh ! I have waited long,” stern Alcar spoke,
“ For some strong arm to break this heavy yoke,
“ Which weighs my spirit down ; some sudden stroke
“ To rive these chains, that I, the air of Heaven
“ May breathe in peace : but they are still unriven.
“ My dreams, my hopes, my life, my very all,
“ Are being crushed while I am held in thrall.
“ And yet thy father promised—long ago—
“ And still I can but love him—to bestow
“ On me the boon of Freedom, ere he died ;
“ That precious gift so long to me denied.
“ But, oh ! I've found 'tis vain to importune,
“ For I shall ne'er receive that priceless boon,

“ Unless I burst the fetters of my fate,
“ And grasp the treasure ere it be too late.”

“ I know it well,” Corlay replied, “ I’ve known
“ The the trials thou hast met. Nor thou alone
“ Hast suffered. Millions more, like thee have
borne

“ The yoke, the scourge, from childhood ; still they
mourn

“ And weep and writhe beneath the robbers’ hand,

“ And that, too, in this boasting Christian land.

“ I know thy secret fears—and well I know,

“ Thy friend Corlay would joyfully forego

“ A thousand joys, if but his ready arm

“ Might shield thee from a spirit-crushing harm.

“ But thou art brave and bold and strong ; and thou

“ Hast no pale fears upon thy dusky brow.

“ Then flee thy chains ; and this free arm of mine

“ Shall guard thee well ; this heart shall bleed for
thine.”

They parted, but to meet some future night,
And then perfect a plan for speedy flight ;
They parted, but like brothers they embraced,
For all their aspirations interlaced.
Each bade farewell, with fond confiding heart
To live. alas ! one gloomy year apart.

CANTO III.

STORY OF ISABEL.

I.

But leave we for a while the fated son
Of Destiny—and sadly turn to one,
Whose fate was linked with his. One summer morn

While yet the dew arrayed the rustling corn,
As Alcar passed a low slave cabin near,
To bear a message to the overseer—
He heard sad plaints of sorrow, half in song :
He listens—such a voice cannot belong
To Earth—tho't he ; 'tis like soft melodies
I've heard in dreams—from upper, holier skies.
In sooth a voice which one would weep to hear ;
And as the plaint arose he ventured near ;
For fain would he but catch the warbled words
Of that sad voice, so like a mateless birds'.
He stops again ; and as he forward bent,
He hears these words : It was a child's lament :

My mother, oh ! my mother !
And is she gone ? How could they sell
Her far away from Isabel ?
And I can love no other
Half so well !

My mother, oh ! my mother !
Alas ! they've driven her away,
To labor through the sultry day—
To suffer for another—
Gone for aye !

Alas ! that I was fairer ;
Oh ! would my brow were dark as thine,
My mother—Heaven would I resign,
Thy lot to be a sharer—
Thou of mine !

My mother, oh ! my mother !
Aye, she is gone. How could they sell
Her from the heart of Isabel ?
She ne'er can love another
Half so well !

II.

She ceased ; and sadly her brow upraising,
Rapt Alcar she beheld, intently gazing ;

And as she turned her tearful eyes on him,
She looked like one of Heaven's Cherubim.
Dark was her cheek, but not so dark as his ;
It had been paled by Fate's adversities ;
More light than Creole's of a tropic clime,
Or e'en the twilight of the Summer time.
Her tender eyes of dark and pleasant blue,
Were like a sky of violet, seen through
The Summer clouds ; betraying her a child
Of mixed descent, from White and Afric mild.
Her hair, so black and curling, hung in tresses
Wooing the while the south wind's soft caresses.

When Alcar saw her lingering silent there,
So innocent—with no affected air,
He looked on her with admiration ; she
Returned the glance with sweet timidity,
And little care at first, but when she met
Again those large and kindling eyes of jet,

She felt their import, and she knew full well,
One heart there was that throbbed for Isabel.
And giving one sweet look of fondness more,
She turned away and sought her cabin door.
The youth—enamored—gazed until her form
Had disappeared—like lightning of a storm
At midnight. Turned he then and went his way
In sadness, for his heart was gone astray.

III.

'Twere needful for the Muse to briefly trace
The life of Isabel. Sprung from a race
Maternally—which seems, alas ! but born
To serve—she too was left indeed forlorn ;
Like thousands of her age and like descent,
And living too where law would not prevent
Her sacrifice to some white villain, she
But felt herself foredoomed to misery.
And being on the verge of womanhood—

Her age was fifteen summers—and her good
Kind mother gone—she longed for some dear friend,
A faithful guardian, who would defend
From all abuse and harm. And while she lay
That night, sweet dreaming of the early day,
And him she met—a spirit whispered near :
“ That noble youth shall banish every fear
“ From thy afflicted heart. And thou shalt meet
“ Him soon—to thee his friendship shall be sweet—
“ Far sweeter than the night dew to the grain,
“ More welcome than the life-reviving rain.”
Meanwhile, angelic hope anear her stole,
And soothed to transient rest her troubled soul.

IV.

Dark Alcar studied less from that bright time,
And why, forsooth ? because it is a crime—
'Tis fundamental in the tyrants' creed
In that curs'd Land for any slave to read ;
And he must grope in darkness, lest the light

Of science shall illumine his path of night ;
For fear it may inspire his fetter'd soul,
To spurn her chains and seek fair Freedom's goal.
Like death it was to him, for he had quaffed
At Learning's fount, and ne'er forgot the draught.
And from thenceforth he sought much less the glade.
The lonely covert and the moonlight aid.
Anon, began to study, how to bless
Another, with his own heart's tenderness.
The maiden he had met, that sunny morn,
Lived, treasured in his heart. New hopes were born,
And tho' he went about his duties—yet
The vision of that morn could not forget.
It haunted him all day and quiet eve,
And in the night it bade his fancy weave
Bright dreams of happiness in future days—
When he might bask in Freedom's genial rays.
Bright dreams indeed were they. Oh ! that he knew
That hope and time would prove them all as true.

Days passed away. But Alcar did not fail
To think of that deserted one—so frail,
So sad, and even as disconsolate
As any dove, a-mourning for its mate.
Nor would he banish from his constant mind,
The scene, the voice—for he must needs be blind,
And even dead, in order to forget,
Inhumanly, the being he had met.
And generous thoughts of pity rose above
All minor thoughts, and almost wakened love.
And why might not the slave youth love ; oh ! why ?
The heart that had no kindred 'neath the sky ;
Oh ! might he not one confidant possess—
'To cheer him in dark hours of loneliness—
To make his bondage easier to be borne—
And when he bade adieu to Earth—to mourn ?
And might he not—the orphaned one—caress
One treasured being, ere he died ? Oh ! yes :
Some spirit told him thus, and bade him go
And seek the one who sadly sang her woe.

Gladly the gentle impulse he obeyed,
At once resolved to seek the lovely maid.
Kind Heaven, be thou propitious yet a while,
And once again upon the Captive smile.

V.

'Twas in the early Summer time ; and all
The world had quite forgotten Adam's fall.
The day had passed in splendor. Lovely Eve
Came joyful o'er the landscape, to relieve
Earth's crisped verdure, and her toiling ones :
Went forth then th' enamored Alcar—as the Sun's
Departing rays did gild the grove with gold.
Down thro' the fields, he bent his way, to hold
Sweet converse with the lovely Isabel ;
To proffer pity, and perhaps to tell
His love. The birds had been away in mirth,
Now came they warbling homeward. Emerald Earth
Arrayed in beauty by the hand of June—

Seemed lingering in her pathway for the Moon
To bear her company ; that her sweet light
Might 'lume them thro' the dusky realms of night.
The while he seeks her cabin ; half afraid,
For fear he may surprise the timid maid ;
But prompted by his heart, he opens the door,
And meets her there as lovely as before.

VI.

Oh ! ye who've seen the dark and sultry day
Look lovelier, when the storm had passed away—
Oh ! ye, who've seen a drooping, dying flower,
Look bright and grateful for the summer shower—
Ye can conceive her joy, well ye may know
By her sweet smile, her cheek's unwonted glow,
That angel Hope proclaimed a bright to-morrow,
And bade pale Isabel forget her sorrow.

A moment passed, and they were there alone :
Spake Alcar then in low confiding tone—

“ My heart hath yearned for thee sad mourner, lorn,
“ And friendless as thou art—since that fair morn
“ When first I listened to thy caroled plaint,
“ Rise Heavenward, like the incense of a saint :
“ And now I come to proffer thee relief—
“ To soothe thy sorrows and to calm thy grief—
“ To seek the cause of thy untimely tears—
“ To hush thy moanings and remove thy fears.
“ And wilt thou wander forth with Alcar, maid,
“ By lovely moonlight down the silent glade ?
“ Canst dare confide thy innocence with him,
“ And walk to-night the forest aisles—so dim
“ And shadowy ? Wilt thou not trust in one
“ Like me ?” “ I go with thee dark stranger—none
“ Had I to bless me or to soothe my woe—
“ Till thou did'st come—no friend had I below.”

VII.

Far down a sleeping meadow—to a dell,
They wander now—Alcar with Isabel.

The noble slave youth—he so good, so brave,
With that most lovely girl, and she a slave !
Delightful was the eve. The queenly Moon
Illumed the mighty Heavens. Ne'er had June
Made dark-eyed night so beautiful before—
So cloudless was the sky, and jeweled o'er
With myriad stars—while many warblers wove
Among the fragrant leaves, sweet songs of love.
The snow-white swans reposing on the lake
Scarce seemed the while a ripple to awake
Upon its argent surface—still and bright,
Lulled to its rest, to slumber for the night.
Delaying oft, they wandered to a grove—
(To them 'twas blissful thus alone to rove)
Of pines. Alcar meanwhile declared his love,
For now his pitying heart brooked no control—
He breathed the holy passion of his soul.

And could the maiden love the Creole—he
Whose bosom yearned for her so tenderly ?

O! did she know what Love's sweet passion is?
Or beat her heart in unison with his?
Go, ask the fugitive, while life remains,
If he can love the hand that brake his chains.
Go, ask the rescued victim of the wave,
If he could love the one who dared to save.
Then by their answer, know that Isabel
Could love the Captive Creole fondly well.

Upon a mound they sat. Among the pines
The wind sighed forth a dirge for Summer. Lines
Of light, which seemed almost a living thing,
Came through the fragrant boughs, more ravishing,
More lovely as they fell upon the ground,
Than all the dazzling lights that e'er hung round
A regal palace. While, among the leaves
Music (like what the fabled Mermaid weaves)
Waked by the wanton breeze—was strangely sweet,
Soothing for once the captives' hearts complete.
Such music there, was magical—fit to move

The heart of youth—fit orchestra for Love.
All else was gone—of kindred they're bereft,
Aye, fate had taken all: but Love was left.
Reclining there, the wanderers talked away
The tranquil hours of that fair moonlit day.

VIII.

One night, the Creole and the maiden strayed
Far o'er the landscape, to a quiet glade.
And while they lingered, each did fain impart
The livelong trials of a trusting heart.
“And would'st thou hear my story?” said the maid,
Her lucid eyes sweet gleaming from the shade
Of dark and glossy tresses. “Listen thou
“The mournful tale, for, oh! 'tis sad enow.”
Then spake she—(but the Muse would fain rehearse
Her artless language in heroic verse.)

“Down by Savannah city—long ago,
“There dwelt a Quadroon maiden, born to woe,

“ Like thousands of her hue. Her beauty woke
“ The passion of the white man, and he broke
“ O’er Virtue’s bounds and stole her chastity:
“ Alas ! thenceforth disconsolate was she.
“ That maiden was my mother. Oh ! how lorn
“ Was she by every one, when I was born.
“ But still she loved me, though a child of shame
“ And grief, and called me by her own dear name.

“ Where Slavery rules, the holy marriage rite,
“ Is treated by its votaries as trite ;
“ The Heaven-commanded rite, where Slavery is,
“ If used—is for the vilest purposes.
“ There, lovely Virtue is but little known,
“ But Vice and Passion sit upon her throne.
“ Relenting, came the master in one night—
“ Repentant, when he saw his child was white.
“ He saw the sorrow, grief and wretchedness,
“ Which he had caused, and promised sure redress.
“ And while he looked upon the infant’s mien—

“ So like a glass in which himself was seen—
“ His heart enlarged to pity, till a sigh
“ His bosom stirred, and tearful was his eye.
“ In nature he was gentle, but the curse
“ Which ruled supreme—made him as others, worse.
“ ‘ Oh ! call her Isabel,’ he spake once more,
“ ‘ It is the name my angel sister bore.’
“ Thenceforth my mother sought her grief to quell,
“ Thenceforth she ever called me Isabel.

IX.

“ Years passed away ; my mother, though a slave,
“ Knew not the worst of servitude. She gave
“ Me every means for learning one could ask—
“ A thousand times assisted in my task ;
“ And when I reached a dozen years of age,
“ Few slaves could better read the English page.
“ I never saw my father—but ’twas said
“ Strange rumors were abroad, that he was dead.

“ But stranger still, he sudden came to life,
“ And to the city brought a Northern wife.
“ My mother heard and felt herself undone,
“ For all her fears had centered into one,
“ The fear that she might lose her darling child
“ Preyed on her heart. Thenceforth she rarely
 smiled.

“ She feared some ruffian band, by foulest play,
“ Might rob her of her darling—tear away
“ The idol of her heart—her nestling dove—
“ The only relic of her youthful love.
“ She knew full well, her master would not dare
“ Allow herself and daughter linger there,
“ For fear they might, unless he set them free,
“ Provoke him with their importunity.
“ Perhaps the daughter might appear in view,
“ When hateful jealousy would sure ensue.
“ Hence many methods of escape she planned,
“ Meaning ere long to flee her master’s hand.

X.

“ Her bodings proved too true. One stormy night,
“ When Nature seemed all trembling with affright—
“ Fit time it was for fiends to stalk abroad
“ To practice rapine, robbery and fraud—
“ They burst our cabin door and tore us thence,
“ Unheeding all our cries of innocence,
“ They met our pleadings with a beastly scoff,
“ Then manacled our limbs and bore us off
“ To Death or Slavery ; each is the same—
“ The difference, I ween, is but in name.
“ They hurried us, through many a dusky street,
“ While in our faces drove the blinding sleet—
“ Till we were almost frantic with alarm,
“ For fear they meditated tragic harm.
“ ‘ Oh ! whither bear ye us ? ’ my mother cried ;
“ ‘ Ye’ll know to-morrow,’ sullen they replied.
“ The startling truth, like an electric shock,

“ Benumbed us. Victims for the auction block !
“ In a lone street the wretches made a halt,
“ And plunged us in a low unhealthy vault.
“ Fragments of chains lay scattered on the floor ;
“ Alas ! some hearts had suffered there before.
“ Then with an oath they bolted fast the door,
“ And departed. Footfalls on the walk
“ Soon died in silence. Oh ! how Fate did mock
“ Our sorrow. There we passed the solemn night,
“ Dreading, yet longing for the morning light.
“ Poor me ! that lonely night—it was the last
“ (Forgive, I can but weep) I ever passed
“ With that dear mother. I shall ne’er forget
“ Her prayers, her tears ; they haunt my memory
yet.
“ ‘ Oh ! Isabel,’ she cried, ‘ and must we part ?
“ ‘ And will they tear thee from my bleeding heart ?
“ ‘ It cannot be ; we must together dwell,
“ ‘ For I can never lose my Isabel ;
“ ‘ But, ah ! they will,’ she murmured with a sigh,

“ ‘ Alone I shall be left to mourn and die.’ ”
“ One burning kiss upon my brow she pressed,
“ And wildly clasped me to her sighing breast ;
“ Embracing thus we sank—but not to rest.

XI.

“ ’Twas morn. The city was astir, but no
“ Bright Sun smiled in our dungeon dark and low.
“ It brought our destiny, we knew too well.
“ Anon, we heard from many a Christian bell
“ Its matin peal—but, ah ! it seemed a knell
“ Of death to us—forsaken victims—thrust
“ Away to pamper sordid pride and lust.
“ Oh ! how we prayed that we might die alone,
“ Unpitied, and by all save Heaven unknown,
“ Deeming it were a happier fate to be
“ Consigned to Death than cruel Slavery.

“ While thus repining in our sorrow—lo !
“ The opening of the door increased our woe.

“ The ruffians came again and dragged us where
“ Wild shrieks and curses poisoned all the air,
“ A gloomy human mart—noisome and damp
“ It was, dim lighted by a dingy lamp.
“ Pure light was not permitted to look in
“ Upon the crime and misery within.
“ And as we passed, the dim uncertain glare
“ Showed dusky forms, made haggard by despair ;
“ Victims, like us, of Mammon’s worshipers.
“ ’Tis strange that Heaven his wrath so long defers,
“ Nor sweeps from Earth such base idolaters.

XII.

‘ The barbarous sale began. And heavy sighs
“ And bitter moans and sorrowings arose,
“ And they were registered above the skies,
“ For God remembers all the poor slave’s woes.
“ How wept the stricken ones ! who feared that they
“ Would next be given o’er, the demon’s prey.

“ Soon to the ever-dreaded auction block
“ A harsh voice called my mother—oh! the shock
“ That pierced my brain and chilled my very heart,
“ When first the tidings came that we must part.
“ My mother fell, as if by lightning stroke,
“ Her reason wavered, and her heart was broke.
“ How wildly did I plead in her behalf!
“ But, ah! the menial crowd looked on to laugh
“ At my distress. Clasping my mother’s neck,
“ I strove to wake her reason, all a wreck;
“ She waked not till the maddened keeper’s whip
“ Had made that dear maternal bosom drip
“ With blood. Then came a base, inhuman crew,
“ And quick with many a grimace round us drew;
“ Then as the wolf, that pounces on the lamb,
“ And tears it from the inoffensive dam,
“ Ah! thus the ruffians from my bosom tore
“ That mother’s form, all reeking with its gore.”

XIII.

“ Oh, Heaven !” raged Alcar cried, “ that I had
been

“ But a spectator of that dreadful scene !

“ Come Death or Hell—I would have rushed be-
tween

“ The villains and their thrall, and would have
borne—

“ But, no ! ’twere useless now—go on, go on,

“ Thy eloquence my soul would live upon !

“ I pitied when I met thee, Isabel,

“ But now I love thee more than tongue can tell.”

“ They thrust her rudely on the shameful stand,

“ Alas ! her beauty doth at once command

“ A ready purchaser—falling a prey

“ To some one down the river—far away—

“ Who seems afraid one moment’s time to waste

“ In kindness. All was done in savage haste.
“ Though shrieks for mercy echoed every where,
“ They heeded not her last imploring prayer—
“ But dragged her to her doom. Thus I was left
“ Alone—of all I had on Earth bereft.
“ Aye, then I lost my dearest friend on Earth ;
“ Nor did I realize her priceless worth,
“ Till she was gone. Then silently I crept
“ Away from sight, and mourned for her and wept.

XIV.

“ Soon came my keeper, and with vulgar phrase,
“ He bade me stand before the rabble’s gaze ;
“ I shrank from him with horror, for his mien
“ Was but a type of cruelty and spleen ;
“ Yet but a moment, he drew his scourge,
“ And vengefully he lashed me, to the verge
“ Of madness—till I rushed and stood
“ Abashed before the hardened multitude.

“ What pangs I suffered, Heaven only knows,
“ This seemed the climax of my many woes ;
“ I called on God with wild entreating cries,
“ To save me from their cruel, torturing eyes.
“ I saw my dreadful future at a glance,
“ No hope—no prospect of deliverance !
“ I saw, alas ! my awful destiny
“ And in my desperation, strove to flee.
“ Ah ! vain attempt ; they caught me at the door,
“ And hurled me back upon the filthy floor,
“ Then dragged me to the auction stand again.
“ At last a fiery frenzy seized my brain,
“ I thought that gentler Death had come to save me
“ From base born men who gladly would enslave me.

“ Naught I remember, till some friendly hand
“ Had kindly taken me from off the stand,
“ And borne me on his strong and generous arm,
“ And hushed to peace my bosom’s wild alarm.
“ My savior was our master. His kind heart

“ Had led him to the low secluded mart
“ For noble deeds. While he was passing near
“ The voice of sorrow fell upon his ear—
“ And venturing in, he saw my deep distress ;
“ The tragic scene awoke his tenderness :
“ Anon he purchased me, at such a price
“ As showed in him a noble sacrifice.

“ I prayed him seek my mother—but no word
“ Of her, nor welcome tidings could be heard :
“ Long sought he through the city—but in vain !
“ Fate seemed as e’er to glory in my pain.
“ Down by the broad Savannah—far below,
“ I know she went, to close her life in woe.
“ The cotton-field, the rice-swamp, was her doom,
“ The soil that drank her blood and tears—her tomb.

XV.

“ Sadly I left the city of my birth,
“ And bade farewell to all I loved on Earth ;

“ Lingerin, I gazed upon the sunset’s fires,
“ Which blazed in beauty on the silver spires ;
“ Sighin, I saw her towers fade from view,
“ Weepin, I turned and bade a last adieu.

“ The gloomy Night supremely reigned o’er all
“ The landscape, ere we reached the Planter’s Hall.
“ Anon he took me to the cabin, where
“ I met thee. Lives a kind old creature there,
“ Who strives to soothe me with her broken voice,
“ And bids me hope that I shall yet rejoice ;
“ That days of happiness are yet in store
“ For me, of which I ne’er have dreamed before.
“ But, oh ! I dare not hope again—for I
“ Have lost my all of Earth, and wish to die ;
“ Ah, yes ! for there is nothing left to please.
“ The joyous wind, gay playing through the trees,
“ Awakes a thousand mournful memories ;
“ I like it not ; methinks it loves to sing
“ That mother’s requiem—or yet to bring

- " More fearful tidings to the sorrowing.
" The Sun, I loved to welcome and admire,
" Seems to have turned an unrelenting fire,
" To burn my mother's brain. The dewy rains
" Of night but come to rust her heavy chains.
" Yon sailing Moon, with gladness in her eye,
" But smiles, when listening to her wailing cry ;
" The songful-birds, with soul-inspiring lay,
" But strive in vain to charm my grief away.
" Naught, naught could charm me, till I heard thy
 voice
" Bidding my poor afflicted soul rejoice.
" Since then the burden of my heart is gone,
" And now upon my vision smiles the dawn
" Of happier days. My night is changed to morn.
" Nor would I give to Fate one word of scorn,
" For fear another night shall come—too soon !"

XVI.

“Never !” brave Alcar cried, “by yon fair Moon,
“And all the stars that look upon us now,
“And by the beauty of thy twilight brow !
“I pledge—if Heaven ordain our lives to spare,
“Thou, in thy youthful years, ere long shalt share
“Sweet Liberty with me.” “Hope not too much,”
Spake Isabel, “for, oh ! with one rude clutch,
“Some tyrant in his madness, yet may tear
“Our hearts apart, and leave us in despair.”
“Trust God—sweet monitress, and hope that we
“From chains and Slavery may yet be free.

“But come away, the night is waning fast ;
“Ere now lone Philomel hath sung her last
“Sad lay. The stars their drowsy eyes are closing,
“And universal Nature is reposing.
“’Tis midnight—and the wind is growing chill,

“ Most mournfully it sighs along the hill.
“ Then come, we’ll seek thy cabin, for the Moon
“ Long since hath waned beyond her twilight noon.”
Before her cottage door they bade farewell,
The Captive Creole and young Isabel,
With gentle interchange of love, they parted,
Hopeful, and happier, and lighter-hearted.

XVII.

Anon, his footsteps toward the mansion turning,
Dark Alcar sought his couch, but thoughts kept burn-
ing
Within his brain—designs of strange intent
About the future, till the night was spent.
But hearing from below his master call,
He set about his tasks, as usual ;
With seeming joy, about his work he went,
That all might deem him happy and content.
Nor thought they of the workings of his soul,

Nor dreamed they that he spurned their base control.
But so it was ; from that eventful hour,
He sought escape from arbitrary power.
Yet, notwithstanding all his feigned content,
His heart's betrayal he could not prevent.
Thus fearing him, the generous planter gave
Assurance to his faithful Creole slave,
That ere the year should pass he would provide
A way to freedom, and a home beside.
As oft fair Hope came hovering, smiling o'er him,
He sleeps, unconscious of the gulf before him :
Alas ! delusive hope ! 'tis but a snare
In which we fall, to perish in despair !

XVIII.

Alcar₁ now pleads his master to recall
The lonely Isabel to Greenwood Hall.
At first for some slight pretext, unexpressed,
He granted not, nor heeded his request.
At length by strong entreaties moved, he gave

Command to bring the "sweet Savannah slave."
And she was brought—most beautiful Quadroon !
Alas ! it needed no interpreter
To tell what gloomy Fate designed for her—
Lovely as twilight of a day in June !
But listen to the Muse—she shall disclose
Most tenderly, the sequel to her woes.
And now a servant in the mansion, free
As any one compelled to serve can be,
And though from time to time its only mistress, yet
No favor there could banish her regret,
Like that which comes from bosoms that have known
The loneliness of being left alone.
Even like hers, bereft of every heart
That could one soothing influence impart.
Like such was Alcar's ; for the fiends of Earth
And Hell, had leagued against him, at his birth ;
And through the many shocks of Fate, had passed
Unscathed—oh ! that he may withstand the last.
Hence, he became her confidant, her all—

To her his voice was ever musical ;
And when her being struggled with its woes,
He soothed her panting bosom to repose.

XIX.

Sweetly the days of that bright season passed,
As they had known, it was to be the last
They were to spend in friendship. Oft times when
Their tasks were over, to a quiet glen,
The fated captives stole away together,
And there amidst the cool delicious weather,
Perused their priceless pages. Oft they went
Forth to the sultry cotton-field, and spent
Long hours among the victims of the scourge,
And finding fainting ones, driven to the verge
Of death, by some base tyrant, would relieve
Them of their crushing burdens, and receive
The blessings of the lowly. Oft across
The river, in the woods, upon the moss

Of some green mound, would half recline and breathe
Their holy vows of love. Perchance would weave
Sweet coronals of flowers, and playful crown
Each other—all unheedful of the frown
The fearful future wore. Still unforgot
The fear remained, that it might be their lot,
Ere long, to suffer—fearing thus, would weep,
Like sea-nymphs exiled from the native deep.
But angel Hope beguiled them of their fears,
And from their eyelids charmed the holy tears.
'Twas thus, while her soft flatteries caressed,
Time sped, and they were lulled to transient rest,
Scarce dreaming now that Destiny had sworn,
That their fond hearts should be by sorrow torn.

CANTO IV.

THE CHANGE.

I.

Alas ! that joy and bliss should be so brief !
Alas ! that lovely Earth is full of grief !
Why weep the Captives ? Why all things beclad
In mourning, which but now were bright and glad ?
The grove is almost silent, scarce a breeze
Bestirs the dark green foliage of the trees ;
Nor sing the birds as they are wont, but low
And plaintive now their mournful numbers flow.
What dread event o'ershadows like a pall,
The ever cheerful faces of the Hall ?
What tidings bid its inmates weep—where tears
Were rarely seen to flow for many years ?

The stirring spirit of the scene, is still,
And cold and lifeless as the frost-bound rill.
The Planter was no more ! Death's messenger
Had sped his dart, and he had ceased to stir.

Thus Alcar's hopes were crushed, and all his fears,
Like phantoms rose, to taunt him with their jeers.
That voice, whose accents he had longed to hear
Proclaim his freedom—came not to his ear.
That hand, which he had hoped would soon have
signed
And sealed his Liberty, its task resigned ;
And he was left with no protection, save
The laws which Tyranny throws round the slave.

Corlay in haste returns—once more to gaze
Upon the Dead—the loved of by-gone days.
Gathered the weeping inmates of the Hall,
In mourning clad, unto the funeral.
Gathered the household servants e'en, to shed

A tearful tribute for the honored Dead.
Gathered the tired toilers of the low
And death-infected rice-swamps, to bestow
One farewell look on him they deemed so great—
On him they had been taught to venerate.
At length, while every thing was clad in gloom,
• They bore the Planter's relic to the tomb

II.

The bondmen were not driven a-field that day,
A different fate designed the good Corlay;
For he remained sole heir of the estate,
And now with love had wealth commensurate.
“The slaves must have their freedom:” His kind
soul
Abhorred the bondmen longer to control;
And waited but his title to secure,
Ere he, their long lost freedom would ensure.

What happy hopes were entertained that night !
How many hearts were filled with new delight !
Pale faces, wet with sorrow's tears before,
Were lit with joy that grief would soon be o'er.
With gratitude they hailed the promised bliss,
For liberty to them was happiness.
Each stricken heart forgot for once its sorrow,
While thinking of the freedom-giving morrow.

False visions ! woven by the hand of Fate—
That seemed in league with Tyranny and Hate—
That ever hastes to heed the Tyrant's beck,
And strives with fierce alacrity to wreck
The hopes of millions seeking but to find
Some refuge from the fiends that scourge mankind.
Alas ! a dreadful change came o'er them now,
Dismay was visible on every brow ;
As if some horrid tidings had been heard,
Which froze the tide of life, at every word.

Another stroke of Fate ! great Heaven ! no more !
If so, then Alcar's worshiped hopes are o'er.
What were the awful tidings ? What dire news
Had rent their heart-strings ? Listen to the Muse :
The great estate was forfeit ; and Corlay
Was left in poverty to grope his way !
The slaves—the proud paternal mansion—all,
All, were mortgaged to another : Dreadful fall !
A rough slave-trader from Savannah came,
And to the fair estate alleged his claim.
There's no escape—'tis useless to lament,
His title to the whole is evident.

What consternation seized on every one !
As if a reign of terror had begun :
As if the Sun at mid-day had been palled,
And all mankind at once enthralled.
As if some monster of the Deep had come,
And struck the inmates of the mansion dumb.

III.

Oh ! what a change stern Destiny had wrought !
Oh ! what a horrid curse the day had brought !
Oh ! how the poor, forsaken captives wailed,
When first they heard their cherished plans had
failed.

'Twas worse than Death's dread summons to their
ears—

'Twas worse than all their agony for years ;
'The dawn of Freedom, which dispelled their woes,
Had darkened ere her glorious sun arose ;
The star of Hope, which blessed their sight, became
Unto their tearful eyes a torturing flame.
Sweet fruit before—upon their lips now turned
To embers—and upon their vitals burned.
Alas ! instead of glorying in Freedom's light,
Backward were hurled in Slavery's awful night.
Although with all his soul, for mercy he appealed,

Alcar was driven with the rest a-field ;
Soon to be banished from the mansion—then
To be lone tenant of a filthy pen ;
All interviews with Isabel were o'er,
And he could pass sweet hours with her no more.
Thus doomed—to labor through the long, long day,
Alcar was driven. Nor yet forgot to pray,
For he had learned his Maker to adore,
From that inspired Volume—long before.
It was a present from Corlay, and he
Now prized it as he prized sweet purity ;
From it Alcar had learned the Christian's creed,
And now while suffering, in his utmost need,
He called on Heaven—in his deep distress,
Praying for rescue from the merciless.
Not yet kind Heaven might lighten his despair,
And he was left in degradation there,

IV.

In vain Corlay besought, in vain he prayed,
And almost super-human efforts made,
The stern decree of Fortune to reverse ;
Still he remained a victim of the curse.
Alcar, at first, was frantic, till his mind
Ran wild with frenzy—then he became resigned
Awhile. But when the idol of his heart
He saw abused, his being quick would start
In passion to avenge the guilty deed.
Or often with the shameless villain plead,
Till reason was dethroned, and he would fain
Have smitten down the savage to the plain.
But Hope and fear conspired to prevent
The consummation of his brave intent.
Oh ! what a hapless life was Alcar's then,
A christian captive in a pirate's den !
A slave, whose aspirations were as high

As those of any soul beneath the sky ;
A man, compelled by those a slave to be,
Who never dreamed of magnanimity.
Driven to madness ! Doomed to toil apart
From Isabel, the idol of his heart !

V.

One sultry noon, venturing from the field,
Where he had toiled until his senses reeled—
Tired Alcar, seeking—weary, worn and faint—
His master, dared to utter one complaint ;
For he had struggled on, till o'er his soul
A base, dehumanizing influence stole :
But his proud spirit would not bear the yoke,
And thus unto the wretch that held him, spoke :
 “ My spirit cannot brook these chains,
 “ Their crushing burden is too much ;
 “ Oh ! then release me from their clutch,
 “ While youthful vigor yet remains.

“ Fondly I hoped my freedom sure,
“ Old master oft declared me free.
“ But I was destined to endure
“ Awhile—bereft of Liberty,
“ Justly mine own—to toil for thee.
“ He died ! no record of his will
“ Was found, and I’m in bondage still.
“ And I have toiled in chains so long,
“ For years have felt the cruel thong ;
“ And thee, most faithfully have served,
“ Nor ever from thy mandate swerved.
“ Thou know’st it all. Oh ! then wilt thou
“ But pity him that prays thee now ?”

VI.

“ Menial, away !” the wretch replied,
“ I know thee well—I’ve seen thy pride ;
“ I know thou dream’st of Freedom—but
“ The portals of her Fane are shut

“ ’Gainst thee forever ! Thou art still
“ A victim of my utmost will.
“ Yes, Slave ! thy heart is now revealed ;
“ Its secret thou hast long concealed,
“ I know. Henceforth, the cotton-field
“ Shall be thy doom. Thither repair,
“ The overseer awaits thee there.”

As comes the note when war’s wild clarion calls,
As Death descends in Fashion’s mirthful halls,
Or frost upon an opening flower falls—
So fell that curse on Alcar’s heart of hearts ;
As when, if ever, angel Hope departs,
And leaves us in our tears, so he was left ;
For, ah ! the cruel stroke had well nigh cleft
His life in twain. And could he suffer more ?
As eve came on, he sought the river shore,
Perhaps to plunge into the kindly tide,
And seek the refuge of the suicide.

VII.

The Moon was shining clear. The evening air
Was busy wafting fragrance every where.
How blest he might have been—while there alone
In peace—if 'Tyranny had been unknown !
E'en nature still is lovely, since the fall,
But tyrants bring a second curse on all.
Slowly and solemnly, he paced beside
The starry waters ; suddenly he spied
A figure merging from a little copse.
Alcar at first was startled—but he stops,
And seeing 'twas Corlay, went forth in haste ;
Joyful they met, and fondly they embraced.

Corlay was first the silent spell to break :
“ Alas ! ” said he, “ suspicion is awake :
“ It steals upon my pathway like a snake !
“ Since my dear father died, thou know'st we've been

“ Together oft ; some pampered wretch has seen
“ Our friendship, and betrayed our confidence.
“ I see the danger and must hasten hence.”
“ Oh ! leave me not again !” the Captive cried,
“ My noble friend ! my only earthly guide.
“ How can I spare thee ? for when thou art gone,
“ It seems as if the Sun had been withdrawn.
“ Oh ! canst thou dare to leave us here, Corlay,
“ To be to these fierce pirate dogs, a prey ?
“ I know thou wilt not go !” “ I must, I must,”
Corlay replied. “ Be faithful to thy trust ;
“ Perfect a plan for an escape, and we
“ Will meet again in peace, when thou art free.
“ ’Twere best for both, that we should separate ;
“ When I am gone, suspicion will abate.
“ And when all things have settled quietly,
“ ’Twill give thee opportunity to flee.
“ Farewell ! To-night I go to Charleston—thence,
“ I know not where. I’ll trust in Providence ;
“ Perchance to some far Northern city—where

“ God grant, I’ll meet with fortune, and prepare

“ A home for thee and me. If Heaven deign

“ To smile, in happiness we’ll live again.

“ Adieu ! remember me to Isabel,

“ Desert her not, be ever true—farewell !”

He fled—and left the toiler there with night,

Aye, vanished he forever from his sight,

Which dimmed, as when the lightning flashes o’er

The sky, and leaves it darker than before.

Soon all was silent, but the night birds, and

The wavelet’s song upon the shelly sand.

Frantic, almost, he lingered there alone,

As if his angel guardian had flown !

VIII.

Soon he revived ; and sadly turned his feet

Back towards the Hall ; for he had pledged to meet

With Isabel, at twelve—down by the grot

Beside the lake. It was a lovely spot,

Enclosed by trees, and opening to the shore ;
Sweet place ! where they had often met before,
In happier days. Passing the Hall, he stood
A moment to survey the solitude,
Then turned within an arbor, and delayed,
To wait the coming of the captive maid.
But being startled by a smothered cry,
He looked, and, lo ! a horseman hurried by,
Bearing a female form. He knew 'twas she,
And springing from his covert, instantly
Pursued the flying steed, and grasped the rein,
Then dragged the ruffian rider to the plain.
He rose ; but Alcar turned his dagger thrust
Aside, and smote the villain to the dust.
Then flew to where his fainting victim lay,
And clasped her form and bore her quick away.
He bore her to the little moonlit cave,
And bringing fragments of the crystal wave,
He bathed her forehead in the precious balm,
And ere an hour elapsed, her pulse was calm.

IX.

The while in accents like to funeral songs,

She told the story of her bitter wrongs :

“ That impious trader from Savannah, he,

“ Aye, he’s the author of my misery ;

“ Thou know’st him well, the low-browed monster,
who,

“ From master’s last levee, in rage withdrew.

“ Last eve_ (it was about the hour of ten)

“ He found my room ; Oh ! how I shuddered, when

“ The libertine betrayed his base intent—

“ Being upon the hellish purpose bent,

“ Of luring me with specious words to be

“ The base companion of his infamy.

“ Oh ! how I prayed that thou would’st only come,

“ And strike the brute, the foul deceiver dumb.

“ I cried in vain ! The house seemed deathly still,

“ When, demon like, he bade me yield his will !

“ My brain was crazed ; I shrieked in agony—
“ And rushing to the alley, strove to flee.
“ But by a desperate plunge, he madly smote
“ Me down, and held me fiercely by the throat,
“ Then dragged me to the entrance by the hair,
“ And reckless bore me to the open air.
“ My heart seemed frozen to the very core,
“ I fainted in his power and knew no more.

X.

“ And now why linger we—my Alcar, why ?
“ To stay, is death—to go, we may not die.
“ Oh ! let us haste, some safe retreat to seek,
“ For now my frame grows tremulous and weak—
“ A fearful pallor sits upon my cheek.
“ Sweet life throbs faint and fainter in my breast,
“ My spirit seeks some calm abode of rest ;
“ The beatings of my youthful heart subside,
“ And slowly circulates the vital tide.

“ I’ve borne without a murmur, heretofore,
“ Nor can I bear the villain’s insults more.
“ And he will come again, I know he will !
“ His ugly visage haunts my slumber still.
“ And should he come again, oh, Heaven ! the last
“ Bright dream of freedom will have passed.
“ Then come ; if I must die, oh ! let it be
“ In some serener clime of Liberty.”

She ceased. And as she raised her placid eyes,
She seemed almost prepared for Paradise.
And while upon her leafy couch she lay,
Beneath the friendly Moon’s most lovely ray,
She looked like some fair martyr, who had given
Her life, her all, for a sweet home in Heaven.
And now, as if a deadly serpent’s fangs
Were closed upon his heart—terrific pangs
Assailed the Creole’s breast. “ My Isabel !”
He cried, “ my weeping, peerless one ! though Hell
“ And fate and tyranny combine, to hush

“ Our spirits longings, and forever crush
“ Our plighted hearts and hopes—though fiends unite
“ To thrust us back to Slavery’s awful night—
“ ’Twere vain ! the hour has come for us to fly,
“ And never be recaptured—rather die !”

CANTO V

THE FLIGHT.

I.

Fair Dawn awoke. And as she raised her veil,
And gave to Earth her radiant beauty—hail !
All hail ! burst forth from myriad voices—while
The World sang songs of welcome at her smile.
Anon, she left her gilded chambers, where

All things were chaste as Virtue's vestments are,
To wander as an Angel forth, to find
And bless with heaven's rays, all human kind.
But might her pure, benignant beams illumine
The bondman's soul, or drive away his gloom ?
Aye, might the toiling slave rejoice ? Oh, no !
Columbia's Tyrants would not have it so.

A still Autumnal morn. The Sun uprolled,
And changed the azure clouds to red and gold.
Light smiled upon the lake, thence from the wave
Glanced upward—peeping in the quiet cave,
Which now was silent as the primal rock,
Ere it is caverned by an earthquake's shock.
The captives had departed. Not a trace
Remained, which could betray their hiding place ;
No more re-visited by them, unless
Their spirits linger there in love caress.

II.

Far northward, in a dark, pine forest, lay
The Pilgrims—hidden from the eye of day—
Sleeping. For they had wandered many a league
Through tangled wood and swamp, until fatigue
Assailed their natures, and benumbed their powers—
Bidding them rest among the sylvan bowers.
Thrice, Isabel had fainted on the way ;
Gentle Alcar as oft strove to allay
Her sufferings, and—oh ! how tenderly !—
Would bear her on his manly arm, till she
Reviving, blessed him with her speaking eyes—
(The loveliest language uttered 'neath the skies !)

Broad day was o'er the world ; the mighty wood
Was one immense expanse of solitude ;
All silent as some cavern never found,
Save here and there a brooklet's murmured sound ;

Or when the breeze came playing through the pines
So rudely shaking off the circling vines.
And there the tired wanderers sought repose
Upon a grassy mound ; from whence arose
A monarch tree, whose overhanging shade
For them a calm inviting covert made.
There they reposed, till sunlight died away,
For it were death to venture forth by day ;
For sure, some base slave-hunter might pursue—
Perchance betray them to a murderous crew.
Thus rested they, in all their wanderings,
Soothed by the holy peace which Virtue brings.

III.

Meanwhile confusion reigned at Greenwood Hall ;
The master in his rage had summoned all
His slaves, and bade them in a threatening tone,
Inform him where the fugitives had flown.
None were aware of their accustomed haunt—

Of their intent to flee, were ignorant.
In vain the trader sought the mansion through,
In vain, to each apartment frantic flew.
At every path he placed a sentinel,
Then hunted fiercely every hill and dell.
With desperate care he ranged the region round,
But yet the fugitives could not be found.

Then woke the vengeance of the tyrant ; and
With wild alacrity he gave command,
And at his call uprose a ruffian band,

Who with their blood-hounds came,
With appetite for human flesh, as keen
As jackal's from the fields of Palestine—
Or tiger stealing from his dark ravine,
In search of human game.

They ranged the forest for their track,
Resolved to bring their victims back.
But guard, O Heaven ! the Innocents,
And drive the mad pursuers hence :

Yet, if canst not, then rather let them be
Delivered o'er to Death, than Slavery.

IV.

We left them sleeping there in fond embrace,
All watchful, worn and wearied from the race ;
And often tears would gather on the face
Of Isabel, as Alcar's sinewy arm
Was lent to shield his drooping dove from harm ;
Tears, pure and grateful, starting silently,
Fell freely from her downcast, closing eye.
There lingered they in peace, till dewy eve
Came on, and brought the hour when they must leave
That safe retreat, to wander off alone
Into the solemn woods, to man unknown.

Oh ! 'twere indeed a sadful sight, to see
Two pilgrims, in a land of Liberty,
Thus thred the wilderness at midnight hour,

To seek protection from a tyrant's power,
And traverse wearily some lonely path,
That they may shun the fierce man-hunter's wrath.
Oh! hateful truth! reality of woe!
And yet Columbia's People will it so.

V.

'Twas twilight in the forest. By degrees,
The loitering sunlight left the lofty trees;
As if it loved to linger there, to lend
Its cheering beams to those who had no friend,
Now toiling on their lonely way. The wind
Uprose, and sadly wailed, as Day resigned
Her sylvan realms to friendly night. But, hark!
A blood-hound's yell back in the gloomy dark,
Comes o'er the captives' ears. Like thunder, burst
The truth on Alcar's mind—he knew the worst.
He started all aghast; a sudden thrill
Of horror seized his soul—and all was still.

But summoning his native courage, he
Attained his wonted calmness instantly:

Nor quailed he at the furious yell,
Which seemed to sound his own death-knell,
But turning, spake to Isabel—

Now yielding in despair:

“ Oh ! falter not, frail one, but flee

“ Away, and seek some sheltering tree ;

“ Oh ! linger not to die with me—

“ Mayhap I'll meet thee there ;

“ If not, farewell !” . “ Ah, me !” she cried,

“ I cannot go—I must abide

“ With thee, and perish by thy side.”

“ Thou canst not—must not linger here,

“ Inevitable death is near !

“ Then haste to find some safe retreat,

“ And may thy dying hours be sweet ;

“ In yon bright Heaven we'll surely meet.”

Frantic forth her arms she flung,
Fondly 'round his neck she clung,
Murmuring—"I'll die with thee,
"Welcome Death, and make us free."
Scarce had she spoken, when the dogs
Came bounding o'er the slumb'ring logs ;
The foremost, a ferocious brute—
All foaming from the fierce pursuit—
Sprang madly towards brave Alcar's throat ;
But with one sabre thrust he smote
Him to the earth, all quivering—mute.
Thus came they on, till every hound
Lay shivering, gasping on the ground.

VI.

Following closely in the chase,
All reeking from the reckless race,
Rode up the hunter, with his gun ;
Then Alcar shuddered ; 'twas the one,

The very wretch, from whom he tore
Poor Isabel, the night before.

“Stand, Slave !” he yelled, “give o’er the maid ;

“Or thou shalt have the bullet’s aid.”

“I heed thee not, pale villain—thou

“Who wouldst have torn from off the brow

“Of this frail being, Virtue’s crown,

“I fear thee not—tho’ thou mayst frown

“Like Satan, when he covets Heaven,

“And backward to his realm is driven.

“Come on ! I do not fear to die—oh no !

“The fear of death was conquered long ago.

“Then dare to touch this maiden here,

“The turf thou tread’st, becomes thy bier.”

He ceased ; a moment intervened,

When onward rushed the frantic fiend,

And forward in his saddle leaned ;

Then raised his rifle to his crest,

And pointed it to Alcar’s breast !

Oh ! shall the Muse relate the rest ?
One horrid crash ; the guilty lead
Upon its murderous mission sped ;
Great Heaven ! the ball hath pierced the side
Of Isabel—the Creole's bride !
A shriek, a sigh ! O fatal harm !
Convulsed, she wildly grasped his arm,
'Then shuddering—slowly shrank away,
And shivering—on the ground she lay.
Upon her there one look he cast,
And saw the life-bloom fading fast,
And saw the red blood flow—ah me !
And stain her bosom's purity !
Upon the features of his love,
He looks once more—and then above :
Then turning frantical from her,
He springs to meet her murderer :
Who swearing vengeance onward came,
Poising once more the deadly aim,
Which Alcar seeing with alarm,

Rushed forth to turn aside :
Too late ! the missile crushed his arm :
But still untterrified,
'Tho' writhing 'neath the dreadful pain—
He strove to snatch the hunter's rein—
'That he might smite the ruffian low :
But he, base coward, feared the blow,
And quickly turned his courser's head,
And backward through the forest sped.

III.

'The sad pale Moon arose. Her soothing ray
Fell softly where the bleeding Pilgrims lay.

With pity in her mien,
She gazed upon the scene—
Gently spake, (or seemed to say,)
“ Victims of despotic sway,
“ Troubled ones, O ! come away ;

“Come with me to peaceful Heaven :

“There thy fetters shall be riven.”

Ah ! what a scene of suffering was there !
Fear and Love, and Death ; but not Despair.
There lay pale Isabel, now faint and dumb—
But Love still lingered in her glazing eyes ;
And while they beamed, despair could never come
To haunt his mind with dread futurities.
And must they close forever ? must the beams
Which lit his darkened soul, and in his dreams
Shone o’er him—must they fade ? Not yet, not yet ;
Heaven spare his heart awhile this last regret.

But Alcar, turn thee now ! thy Isabel
Mayhap would whisper thee her last farewell.
Unto his bosom then he clasped her form,
And bore it where the moon’s calm ray seem’d warm.
The fatal wound had almost ceased to flow ;
Alas ! the throbbing of her heart was low.

Yet in her agony she murmured not,
But like a lamb submitted to her lot ;
Submitted peaceful, like a martyr saint,
Nor uttered one regret, nor sadful plaint.

VIII.

The chilling wind had ceased to revel now,
Nor could the breeze play wanton on her brow :
Beside a jutting rock—far in the dell,
He bears the fragile form of Isabel :
There, drooping like the foliage of the willow—
She leans upon his bosom for a pillow.
A moment she revives, and bids him bring
Sweet water from the limpid forest spring ;
“ Oh, let me taste,” (said she) “ the precious balm,
“ Perhaps ’twill make as erst, my bosom calm :
“ Then tarry not for me—in this sweet place
“ All hidden from the vision of the base,
“ My eyes shall close in death ; my panting soul,

“ Erelong, shall find above a happier goal.
“ Oh! listen, Alcar, linger not for me,
“ But from these base blood-thirsty tyrants flee;
“ Ay, haste thee now! else they will come at dawn,
“ And tear thee hence.” “ Fear not, my dying fawn;
“ For should they come, I’d love to die with thee,
“ And bear thy pilgrim spirit company;
“ Weep not for me, shed not one precious tear,
“ But lay thy head upon my bosom here,
“ And linger there, sweet Seraph, till the last,
“ The ever dreadful parting pang is past.”
Thus saying—with emotion, Alcar pressed
The dying Isabel unto his breast:
Weeping as angels wept when thrust from Heaven
To see his sainted love thus from him riven.

Silent, upon his breast did she recline,
And looked like one already half divine:
Nor saw his tears—ah, no—her dark blue eyes
Looked out no more upon their kindred skies.

“Great God!” he cried, “oh, grant but one look
more—

“A word, a farewell glance, ere all is o’er;

“Oh! speak to me, my dying one, before

“Thou leavest me alone in all my woe.”

Then moved her paling lips, and murmured low—

“My spirit soon shall wing the morning air

“Of Heaven: O, noble A’ear! meet me there

“Where Love—and Liberty”—he raised her head:

Alas! the martyred Isabel lay dead

Upon his bosom.

IX.

Long, Oh! long he wept
Love-tears upon her brow, and solemn kept
Affection’s vigils. E’en the joyous Moon—
Now waning far below night’s dusky noon
Arrayed herself in mourning at the scene;

Began to veil from Earth her pleasant mien :
Erelong, in seeming grief retired to rest,
Behind the distant mountains of the west.
Meanwhile, the stars had vanished—one by one,
As sunlight leaves the hills when day is done ;
And morn walked forth among the quiet woods—
A beauteous Goddess of their solitudes.
Still Alcar sat in grief, and wept and gazed
In turn, till his heroic soul was crazed.
Oh ! look thy last, dark mourner, on the charms
Of her, now sleeping silent in thy arms ;
Yea, sleeping ne'er to ope her starlike eyes,
Until they ope above—in Paradise.
O precious clay ! sweet fate it were to rest
Forever on thy lover's faithful breast.
But no, it cannot be, thy soul is gone,
And thou must seek repose beneath the lawn :
There mingle with the mold among the bowers,
Thenceforth in beauty live again, in flowers.

CANTO VI.

THE CAPTURE.

I.

Arose the stricken son of sorrow—now
And called on Heaven to record his vow :
And, as among the silent shades he trod,
Heavenward he looked, as if he talked with God.
Solemnly he spake, as one inspired—
As if some prophecy his soul had fired ;
 “ By the loved clay which lieth there,
 “ By this pale dust of hers I swear,
 “ Her murderers shall strive in vain
 “ To fasten on these limbs the chain ;
 “ This soul shall ne’er give up, until
 “ The current of its life is still :

- “ Welcome the slumber of the grave
“ Rather than live to be a slave !
“ I’ll ne’er be conquered but by death,
“ Nor yield until I yield my breath.
“ I’ll seek a land of freedom—thence I’ll come
“ And tell my story to my brethren dumb.
“ Hear me, oh Heaven ! this only boon I crave—
“ To rescue from his chain my brother slave :
“ Then grant me life—it shall be spent
“ In labor for the innocent :
“ In toiling for the crushed and weak :
“ ’Tis all the vengeance which I seek.”

II.

Then brushing from his dusky cheek
The tear-drops, which had gathered there—
He turned his eyes towards Heaven in prayer :
Then wrapped the sleeper’s form with care :
Raising the treasure to his breast,

He sought for it a place of rest :
He bore it to a hillock, where
The sun had bent his earliest ray,
Which warmed to love the chilly air,
And made it like a morn of May.

There with his callous hands,
He scooped the yellow sands—
Then pressed his lips upon her brow,
And murmured once again his vow.
One humble prayer above the dead,
Was all the ceremony said.
And there—with no unmeaning rite—
He placed her in the shallow grave,
And soon, forever from his sight
Was shut the sweet Savannah Slave.

III.

Scarce had he smoothed the sand above her head—
Scarce breathed a farewell to the sainted dead—

When suddenly a yell he hears,
As unexpected to his ears
As thunder from a cloudless sky ;
And startling as a panther's cry.
And yet it was, he knew full well,
The prophecy of Isabel.
Still as a statue, Alcar bowed,
Unheedful of the vengeful crowd,
Which came—as once the devil came
To hunt his paradisal game—
And soon began to gather round,
Both master, menial, horse and hound.
Then rose he from his bended knee,
To seek some passage whence to flee—
And turning would have fled, had not
A ball transfixed him to the spot :
And there he fell—the good, the brave,
All bleeding o'er his loved one's grave !
Undaunted by the savage crew,
Quick to his utmost hight he drew,

Then waved on high his bloody hand,
Defiant of the murderous band :
But ah ! 'twas vain. They hastened round
Like Cannibals, with eager bound ;
Then chained him to a fiery steed,
And sought the Hall with savage speed.

IV.

O Earth ! when will thy fiends depart,
That love to crush the human heart ?
That only live, as they devour
The stricken victims of their power ?
When may the lowly of mankind,
A refuge from their fury find ?
When shall the good of Earth, unite
To rescue Innocence from Might ?
Bid despots take their place with men,
Bid Peace resume her reign again ?
O Heaven ! speed the glorious hour,

When Tyrants shall resign their power,
When all on Earth, as all Above,
Shall recognize the "Law of Love."

V.

'Twas almost sultry noon when they returned,
And chained the Captive on the crisped grass :
Backward he lay beneath the sun. Alas !
Those cruel beams in wrath vindictive burned
His brain : soon madness must have seized his soul,
Had not one sainted spirit gently stole
Anear, and soothed his passions to repose,
Bidding him bear with fortitude his woes.
Thus slowly passed the torrid noontide. Then
They dragged him forth for trial. Heartless men !
Bereft of pity, worse than brutes were they—
All gathered there to tantalize their prey !

Forth stepped the trader of Savannah, first,

And madly, like a pent volcano—burst
In imprecations forth—with lying breath,
The coward charged poor Alcar with the death
Of Isabel ! Thus, while his ugly brows
Were knit with feigned regret—he sought to rouse
The indignation of the revelers,
Who clamored for his blood like hungry curs.
“ I saw him lure the maiden forth,” he cried,
“ One night while walking by the river side :
“ I saw at once the rascal’s mean intent,
“ As there he strove her heart to circumvent :
“ And when they fled, immediate I pursued,
“ And traced the runaways to yonder wood :
“ While this black wretch, with most satanic art,
“ That he might hide the low infamous part
“ He played, quick stabbed his victim to the heart !
“ Then fired with most consummate care,
“ And struck my weapon in the air :
“ Thus weaponless, for fear of harm,
“ I hastened back to give th’ alarm.”

VI.

At once, what pangs of indignation wrung
The Captive's soul ! Oh ! he would fain have sprung
And robbed the pale deceiver of his tongue—
Which thus belied his virtue. But 'twas vain ;
His strength was gone—he could not rive the chain—
Which was to him like death without a grave.
But turning thence an unchained brow, he gave
One glance of high disdain from fiery eye—
Giving the villain's hell-black tale the lie.
It was enough. He wished then but to die.

Oh ! monstrous, monstrous charge ! falser than hell !
Alcar the murderer of Isabel ?
That precious being he had worshiped more
Than life, than all of Earth, or Heaven, before !
And can he live, or die, and let the stain
Forever on his character remain ?
He must, he must. Alas ! their cruel laws

Allowed no advocate to plead his cause.
And will not Heaven, with an avenging hand,
Strike down the guilty trader and his band,
And break at once the Captive's festering chain,
And bid him rise to liberty again ?
Ah no ! poor wounded Slave ! a different fate
Awaited him, more sad and desolate.

Made furious by the manner Alcar bore
His sufferings, the trader spoke once more :
“ Comrades, what disposition shall be made
“ Of this notorious, guilty renegade ? ”
At length the mob with most satanic ire
Condemned the Captive, to a death by fire !

Then backward on the turf, the ruffians bent
The fettered Slave, and to the mansion went,
Filled with malice, filled with hellish glee,
Tumultuous, to join in revelry.
Nor could they leave their victim, till they cast

Their vilest curses on him as they passed.
The trader taunted him in tones of scorn,
And bade him hope to see the morrow morn;
“For then,” cried he, “we’ll have a ‘feu de joie,’
“You shall feel the fire, and I the joy.”
With that he smote him with his heavy cane,
And left poor Alcar writhing with the pain.

O Innocence! how oft thy blood is spilt!
Thy dear life sacrificed for other’s guilt!
Behold the Christ, upon that gory tree—
Dying to save a world from misery.
Witness the bloody Code, which dooms a man
To death—who dares condemn the haughty clan
Which drives the moaning millions forth to toil,
Unpaid, on Freedom’s consecrated soil:
Oh! when shall cease for aye such dread turmoil?

They left him not alone; the coward knaves
Had stationed as a guard two trusty slaves,

For fear the fettered fugitive might flee,
And thus deprive them of the morrow's glee.
There, 'neath the burning sun, the Captive lay
Exposed all helpless to his torrid ray.
Unheedful of his pangs the hours did pass
Until the lengthening shadows on the grass,
Declared that day was fast departing now,
That Eve might come and cool his aching brow :
She came at last, and with ambrosial breath,
Soon freed the air from all its sultry death.

Awhile the Slave reposed. But soon the chill
Of night came on, and sent a deathly thrill
Along his veins—till life was almost still.
But hark ! what is't that breaks his deathly trance ?
What is't that makes him start, and wildly glance
Around, and tho'tless for a moment strive
In agony his rankling chain to rive ?
A storm was looming up the southern sky,
Its thunder voice awoke his ear ;

Its lightning quick unclosed his heavy eye,
And made him tremulous with fear.
Anon, the breezes crept from off the lake,
And lightly stirred the crisp leaves of the brake :
Sad as the echo of a funeral bell,
Far in the forest, wind gusts rose and fell—
Or rudely shook the ornamental trees,
Or brought the sound of drunken revelries,
Which issued doleful from the 'lumined Hall,
As if the fiends were holding carnival.
All things beside now slumbered as the dead :
In little time the frightened menials fled,
And left the Captive on his cold earth-bed.

C A N T O V I I .

T H E E S C A P E .

I.

How true—when joy and hope, and friends depart
Kind Heaven remembers well a trusting heart.
Scarce had they gone, when hark ! a step he heard ;
And then a voice, and then a gentle word :
Who was't that dared the threat'ning tempest power,
By venturing forth at such a solemn hour ?
Was it the vengeful trader, skulking there,
Like panther stealing from his cavern lair ?
Oh ! had he come to torture him once more—
To glut again his fell revenge, before
They led him forth to martyrdom ?
Ah no ! not he ; 'twas gray-haired Paulo come—
At once a slave, and yet a veteran

Of revolution age—a noble man ;
Who fought for freedom from despotic power,
And served in bondage till this very hour.
Yes, he had come to loose the Captive's chain,
And bid him strive for liberty again.
The noble principle, which bade him bleed
For freedom—prompted now the generous deed.

“ I know thy sufferings, brave Alcar, well ;
“ I knew thy deathless love for Isabel :
“ Although a slave, I know thy history,
“ And now have risked my life to set thee free :
“ The tempest king holds revelry to-night,
“ And all things seem propitious for thy flight.
“ Thy enemies will hold their orgies late ;
“ Awhile perhaps they may forget their hate.
“ Then flee, brave Alcar, leave thy chains and flee,
“ And I will pray great God to rescue thee.”
“ Ah ! no : I cannot leave thee, reverend sire,
“ I rather bide the thong, the stake the fire.

“What ! leave thee in the hands of such a clan ?
“Much sooner would I risk the Fever ban,
“Then stay thou not to see another sun,
“But go and taste the freedom thou hast won.”

“Speak not of me !” (the veteran replied,)
“My youth is gone”—(and here the old man sighed ;)
“My tasks will soon be o’er, then cease to urge,
“For I can bear a few more days the scourge ;
“Then I shall rest, from all my sorrows free,
“Then I can taste eternal liberty.
“But thou art young and strong, and may yet live
“To rescue many a brother fugitive.
“Resume thy manhood ! spurn these hateful chains—
“While yet the vigor of thy blood remains.
“Rise ! wake thy spirit from her lethargy ;
“Delay is death ! then flee—O Alcar ! flee.”

Quick then the veteran unclosed the hasp—
Released dark Alcar from his fetters’ grasp.

Then rose the grateful Captive, and embraced
The generous, gray-haired Paulo—then in haste
He took a hidden path across the glen,
And started on his lonely flight again.

On came the thundering tempest—till the light
Of Heaven was conquered by its triple night.
Far out amid the rude unfeeling storm,
The Hero plodded on until his form
Was almost vigorless ; but still he yields
Not to the elements. Across the fields
Far o'er the great plantation,* hastens he,
Undaunted by the storm-fiend's revelry.
Soon he approached the border of the wood
Which he had passed with Isabel ; there stood
At rest. Darkening widely as it went,
The tempest ruled almost omnipotent.
And now, terrific lightnings flash ;
The frightful glare his eyes unseal,
Then all is dark again :

Quick followed then a thunder crash,
In such a startling, stunning peal,
As made the gazer reel.

Down came the rushing rain,
As if the mighty main
Were garnered in the skies.

But lo ! what is't that holds his gaze,
And stuns his spirit with amaze ?

The lordly mansion is ablaze
Before his 'wilderer eyes !

A vengeful bolt had left its cloudy home,
And cleft in twain the mansion's fated dome :
Thence downward 'mong the halls had circled round,
And lost its fury in the humid ground.

Perhaps old Paulo, with avenging hand
Applied the fatal torch, the fiery brand—
A just revenge for long neglected claims—
Avowed the deed, and perished in the flames,

A moment, and the conquering fires
Shot heavenward in blood-red spires ;

Until the gleam so broad and high,
Revealed the dark tempestuous sky—
Revealed the storm-fiend, thundering by.

II.

Long Alcar gazed upon the scene and wept ;
Not as a child, but silent, manly tears—
As all the holy scenes of by-gone years,
Which sweetly in his memory had slept,
Came thronging to his anguished mind, and bore
It back to blissful interviews of yore
With Isabel. The park, the glen, the grove
Where in the summer nights they used to rove ;
The silvery lake, with pendent willows lined,
The lovely grotto—in his heart enshrined—
The ever sparkling river, on whose tide
The lovers' light sail shallop once did glide—
The rose-clad porticos, the vine-clad walls,
Where birds were wont to hold their festivals—

In one delightful panoramic view,
Upon his spirit vision smiled anew.

He loved that mansion still ; why should he not ?
Young life beneath its dome was unforgot.
'Twas there he served with Isabel so long,
Almost unconscious of the hainous wrong ;
But now that she had left those pleasant halls,
He wished that he had died within its walls ;
Or wished, into the flames he had been thrust,
To mingle with its ashes back to dust.
But no ; 'twere worse than folly to repine
When Heaven commands—he must resign
Them all forever : for those haunts so sweet,
Had long been marred by “ rude unhallowed feet.”
And could the fleeing Captive be resigned
To such a fate, and leave those scenes behind ?
Ah ! yes : their sweet enchantress now was gone ;
The one that hallowed them had been withdrawn :
Nor could he even now consent to flee,

Wer't not that threatening Death and Slavery,
Like two fraternal demons lingered there
To poison and pollute those scenes so fair.

Still raged the tempest on—nor less the fire
In fury shot its angry arrows higher,
Till far and wide, and on the clouds o'erhead,
Its red terrific glare in splendor spread,
And like some huge volcano's light,
Rebelled against the reign of night.

In sorrow Alcar lingered till the last
Red gleam of flame shot upward on the blast ;
And fainter grew, and fainter still the light,
Till scarce a spark came forth upon the sight.
Meanwhile the tempest king had ceased to rave,
And sought repose in some dark mountain cave :
And as the storm sank down to sleep,
The mansion fell, a smouldering heap.

III.

Long since the midnight hour had passed, and soon
The envious clouds withdrew that hid the moon,
Which gave in kind compassion her soft light,
To 'lume the mourning pilgrim on his flight :
But ah ! no Isabel went by his side,

With cheering words in love's sweet tone :
His heart was desolate since she had died,"

And now, to wander forth alone—
'Twould be like groping in a world unknown.
Her presence once inspired him, and her voice
Like dulcet music, made his heart rejoice.

Alone, alone ! O ! how the hateful word
Did pierce his tortured bosom like a sword !
Shall he alone gain freedom ? dismal thought !
Earth would be a dungeon, life were nought.
'Thus lingered he, lamenting o'er his lot,
Until HER spirit whispered, " tarry not."

All heedful of the voice, one look he gave,
Then entering the forest, sought the grave
Of Isabel.

IV.

Aurora, with a grace
Divine had visited the holy place,
And shed a glory on the foliage round,
Ere Alcar reached the consecrated ground.
Now reverent kneeling o'er the hallowed mound,
Which held the martyr's dear remains,
He breathed in sad heart-touching strains,
A last farewell
To Isabel.

1.

“Farewell, farewell the loveliest form,
“That ever blessed adoring eyes ;
“Now sheltered safe from every storm,”

“It rests till Heaven shall bid it rise

“To Paradise.

2.

“Farewell dear martyr, thou didst bleed,

“The victim of a tyrant’s hate :

“But thou art now from sorrow freed ;

“Thy spirit triumphs over fate

“In happy state.

3.

“Farewell sweet Pilgrim—precious boon,

“That Heaven in mercy lent to me,

“But taken from me, all too soon,

“To grace Celestial company

“That wait for thee.

4.

“Adieu, sad mourner—injured slave !

“ O Earth ! press lightly on her brow :
“ I’ll worship by her lonely grave,
“ Nor leave it ever—but my vow
“ Commands me now.

• 5.

“ Adieu, kind spirit ; can I leave ?
“ Then listen to his last farewell
“ Who never will forget to grieve
“ For that lost one he loved so well—
“ Dear Isabel !”

He ceased, still kneeling on the humid sand,
And humbly turned his weeping eyes above,
Praying to Heaven that no barbarian’s hand,
Might e’er disturb the relics of his Love.
Then planted he the lily of the valley,
And many forest flowers around her tomb :
Praying that oft the warm sunshine might dally
Above the spot, and call them into bloom.

This done, he sought the sweet wild rose,
That in the southern forest grows—
He plucked the diadems
From off its thorny stems :
And then with love almost divine,
He placed the fragrant gems
Upon his heart's most holy shrine.
At length with angel-like endeavor,
He tore himself away forever ;
And turning almost broken-hearted,
Upon his pilgrimage departed.

V.

And what was left the Pilgrim then O ! what,
Since she, the chosen partner of his lot,
His faithful monitress was gone ? oh ! nought
But one faint hope of freedom ; yet 'twas fraught
With charms enough to cheer him on through all
The dread adversities which might befall,

While seeking for a land of rest—so far—
No pilot but a Heaven-appointed Star,
Which shines a sure eternal guide for those
Who seek some refuge from a land of woes.

No hope was left the Captive but to bear
His sufferings till he might breathe in air
Untainted by a fiend's pestiferous breath,
Which e'en to breathe is but to live in death.
He little knew what mean relentless foes
Would swarm upon his pathway to repose ;
Nor dreamed he that the clime of Freedom lay
Far in the wintry Northland—far away.
And will not Fate, repentant of the past,
Bestow on him the precious boon at last ?
It must be so ; else how can mercy be
A friend to poor oppressed Humanity ?

VI.

Now onward wearily the Pilgrim went,

When pain or penury did not prevent :
Oft-times by day, and oftener by night,
Laboriously he kept his northward flight :
Oft-times beheld the long, long day depart,
Without a morsel to revive his heart :
While resting on his lowly couch of grass,
He frequent saw the fierce man-hunter pass
Upon the track of those who, like himself,
Had fled from some base worshiper of self.

Right onward like a Pilgrim to his shrine,
Brave Alcar pressed, as if a power divine
Now cheered him forward in his sad career,
And banished from his mind the phantom, fear.
Sometimes o'er rugged rocks his pathway led,
Where jutting cliffs hung frowning overhead.
Painful he toiled through many a tangled swamp,
Where hideous reptiles slily creep and camp :
Sometimes through cultured fields he found his way,
In hearing distance of the house dog's bay :

Thence backward in the forest—where daylight
Was almost softened down to starry night.

The while he crossed some wild untrodden waste,
Where slavery, with avaricious haste,
Had stripped the soil of all things green and fair,
And left it sterile, desolate and bare.

Thus sped he on, still trusting Providence
To rid his path of all impediments ;
Still hoping on, in humble faith he trod—
Finding no softer pillow than the sod—
Finding no friendly being but his God.

The while upon that Star of hope, his eye
He turns with all his soul's idolatry—
(Most blessed orb of all the northern sky,)
Bright Pilot of the slave! leading him forth,
A hopeful Pilgrim to the freer north.

Joyful he sought that brilliant star at even,
As if it lit the entrance into Heaven !

With eager haste he speeds, while flattering Hope,

Appearing with her magic telescope—
Revealed the haloed goal he sought to find,
And banished half the sadness from his mind :
Till all the future lay one pleasant scene,
As beautiful as it in youth had been.
And scarce a month had passed away, before
He trod the realms of slavery no more.

VII.

But soon another enemy arose,
Which proved the most destructive of his foes ;
'The cruel frost, congealing as it came,
Benumbed with freezing breath his weary frame.
December breathed upon the autumn air,
Which rising, shook the forest bowers bare :
All wavering, the crystal flakes of snow
Fell silent on the withered leaves below ;
Meanwhile the flowers beneath, and leaves o'erhead,
Bereft of all their beauteous hues, lay dead.

And soon o'er earth the dreary snow drifts lay
Like any frost upon the flowers of May.

And now will not the Pilgrim seek some cave—
Some sheltering cavern for a peaceful grave?
Ah no! the fugitive would not delay,
But pressed in agony upon his way.
At last his star of hope grew brighter, when
He trod secure the mighty land of Penn;
Fair Empire! once the slave might rest in thee—
O! would that thou wert still as truly free;
But thou art not, for thou dost basely bow
In reverence to the hideous Moloch, now.

One evening, of a day of wintry wrath,
Poor Alcar—worn and wounded—lost his path;
For then so chilly had the air become,
It made the toiling sufferer almost dumb;
And sinking back in sorrow he gave o'er—
Alas! the wanderer could do no more.

But could he yield himself to cold despair,
And hopeless end his fruitless journey there ?
Oh no ! thought he, I'll toil while I have breath,
For lingering here will only hasten death.

Then rising to his feet again,
He struggled onward o'er the plain.

VIII.

Scarce had he started when a light
Smiled through the darkness on his sight :
It roused him from his deep distress,
And woke at once his consciousness—
And guided by its friendly ray,
He found a cottage by the way ;
And while his heart was palsied to the core,
He ventured trembling to approach the door :
A follower of Penn he found within,
(Humaner hearts, I ween, have never been.)
The Pilgrim told his tale—he found a friend,

One generous soul on whom he might depend.
“ My Son,” (spake he) “ thou must not linger here,
“ For worse than enemies are lurking near :
“ They passed—a pirate horde—but yesternight,
“ And thou must urge with cautiousness thy flight.
“ Time was when Freedom’s sons would not allow
“ Such wretches to pollute her plains, but now
“ A black nefarious law protects them here,
“ And thou indeed hast every cause to fear.
“ Suspend thy journey till to-morrow eve,
“ And I will strive thy sufferings to relieve :
“ In peace remain—the winds are chill without—
“ Nor venture hence, for danger lurks about.”

IX.

“ Is there no refuge for the fugitive,
“ Not even here where he may only live ?”
Cried Alcar, as he raised his streaming eyes,
Communing with some spirit of the skies ;

If so, great God ! “ ’Tis even so, there’s not
“ In all Columbia one sacred spot,
“ Not even in the mighty Empire State,
“ Which petty tyrants may not desecrate :
“ No blest asylum where her pleading slaves,
“ May find a refuge from the brutal knaves
“ Who fain would drag them back to death : ah me !
“ All, all is sacrificed to slavery.
“ No color, character—no class or clan,
“ That is exempt from its all withering ban.”

“ But far, far northward is a land so fair,
“ Whatever else, there is no slavery there ;
“ A Queen’s domain, Columbia’s panting thrall
“ No sooner reaches than his fetters fall.
“ Humiliating thought ! that such a land
“ As ours must suffer from the despot’s hand.
“ But so it is ; the nations all behold
“ Columbia’s base idolatry to gold ;

“ They scorn to hear her boasts of liberty,
“ And rather hug their chains than thus be free.”

“ Pilgrim, thy path is perilous I know,
“ And there’s no mercy in the driving snow ;
“ Oh ! many here are waiting to waylay thee,
“ A thousand even now would fain betray thee.
“ But seek thy couch the while, and I will pray
“ Kind Heaven to guard thee on thy lonely way.”
This said, they found an undisturbed repose,
Sweet rest ! which nought but Innocence bestows.

CANTO VIII.

THE TRAGEDY.

I.

Night came again. The lingerer must depart
And leave the Christian who, so kind of heart
Had shielded from the monster's bloody jaws,
Defiant of his worse than barbarous laws,
Which make it criminal to be a man—
'To shield a brother from a murderous clan.
And now he points the pathway he must take,
To shun this wide morass, or that broad lake :
Then with a fervent blessing he withdrew,
And left the hero pilgrim to pursue
'The trackless way alone. But O ! my friend !
His miseries with his journey soon shall end.

His sufferings on earth will soon be o'er ;
And thou must seek him on the farther shore,
Of life's storm-haunted ocean—never more
To be returned to bondage by his foes :
In little time the tragedy must close.

But listen ! on despairing not he went,
Upon one mighty purpose fiercely bent,
As if the troubles of his path were sweet
Compared with slavery—with woes replete :
Right onward like a tall majestic deer,
Which circles mountains in its wild career—
Striving to flee the fierce blood-thirsty pack.
So now the Hero trod the ice-paved track,
Till from his feet large blood-drops fell behind,
Congealing in the cold relentless wind.
Thus toiled he on thro' many a long cold night ;
For not by day dared he pursue his flight,
For fear some bribed villain might waylay
His path, and give him o'er the pirate's prey.

The while deep flowing, surgeless streams he crossed,
And rivers sheeted with the glassy frost—
He swam, while moony rays came down so bright,
That all the waters seemed but frozen light.
Sometimes he ventured on the traveled road,
But oftener in the still cold woods he trode ;
Oft tired of life, and driven to despair,
Into some lonely hovel would repair,
And pass the day in bitterness and woe,
Which Heaven grant no other heart may know.

II.

O ! Reader kind, humanity now lies,
Writhing in bondage 'neath your very eyes ;
And will Columbia's sons refuse to rend
The festering chain till slavery have an end ?
Shall we who sent our legions o'er the sea,
That classic Greece might yet once more be free—
Shall we, who struggled with a foreign foe,
Turn listless from this mighty cry of woe,

Which comes portentous to the startled ear,
As fearful sounds proclaim the tempest near ?
May we bestow our treasure on Kossuth,
And yet degrade our subjects with the brute ?
May South America receive our aid
To crush her tyranny of every grade ?
May we rejoice to see it overthrown
In foreign lands, but never in our own ?
Ah no ! let bondage be accursed ; let pride,
Let avarice and hate be thrust aside.
Bid well paid labor once more take the field,
And all the forms of tyranny shall yield.
Let freemen rule—let only freemen toil
Upon Columbia's consecrated soil.

III.

'Tis near to twilight of a wintry day,
And Alcar almost frantic with delay—
Passing the freezing hours in some lone shed

Till his whole being save his heart—seemed dead—
Now ventures from his covert, ere the light
Has yielded up the world to sombre night,
So he may find if possible, relief;

For want sits pale upon his cheek,
His shivering frame grows strangely weak,
All crushed by hunger, servitude and grief.

He spies a mansion just ahead :
He dares to enter, pleads for bread,
But ah ! the cruel ones were deaf
To his entreaties, as the dead :
For heedless of his faint implore,
They fiercely curse him from the door.
He ceased to plead, he answered not,
But turned away in agony :
And would have died upon the spot,
But for one hope of liberty.
One lingering hope that he might yet be free.

Yes, knowledge ! freedom ! fond inspiring words !

They echoed sweetly in his ear,
In accents like the fabled spirit bird's,
Bidding him never faint nor fear.
They came in tones of stirring gladness,
They woke him from his dreams of madness;
They came in voice of melody,
Hope lighted once his fireless eye,
He struggled on, nor would he die.

IV.

Scarce had he started when a gang
Of ruffians from their ambush sprang,
And with a yell, enough to fright
Fell demons from their dens of night—
They rushed in madness to assault
The fugitive, and bade him halt.
Unterrified and unappalled,
Upon that spirit one he called,
And by her silent words inspired,

His soul with energy was fired :
And springing forward like the wind,
Soon left the savages behind.

But oh ! what boding echoes rang
Among the boughs so bare ?
It was the rifle's fearful clang
Against the wintry air :
And where was Alcar—where ?
A dreadful weight his mind oppressed,
His heart seemed melting from his breast :
The ball had pierced the Pilgrim's side,
His life was ebbing with the tide.
But, turning towards the darkling woods,
He strove to gain their solitudes :
But lo ! a wall uprose between
The Captive and a dark ravine ;
And thinking now himself undone,
He centered all his powers in one,

And dreaming once of Isabel,
He leaped the barrier and fell.

V.

On came the rabble with a shout,
Resolved to hunt their victim out.
Awhile they sought him in the wood,
Awhile in consultation stood ;
But failing in their base intent,
With muttering curses backward went.

Oh ! is there yet a happy chance,
One prospect of deliverance ?
Then wake thee, Alcar, from thy trance.
But darkness came apace, and all
Around was shadowed by her pall ;
Night closed the barbarous pursuit,
And soon all things were cold and mute.

Oh ! constant worshiper of freedom ! thou

Alas ! must yield the fatal conflict now ;
"Twere hopeless to contend with destiny,
For only death can ever set thee free.
Ah me ! there is no pity in mankind,
No more than mercy in the wintry wind :
Forsaken by his country he must die ;
Columbia listens not his dying cry.
Painful he dragged him to the nearest way :
Long, long in dying agonies he lay ;
Praying the while that some pursuing one
Might pass and close the tragedy begun.
But while his soul's dark fane was being rent
To ruin, Alcar breathed one last lament.

“ Oh ! 'tis a freezing night !

“ But I, poor wanderer, must die alone

“ Upon this snowy bed ; with no kind tome

“ To give my soul delight

“ In her last sorrow : ah ! that I should die

“ Alone ! Oh God ! without a friend to linger nigh.

“ No, no ! I can not do

“ With freedom’s blessed elixir so near at hand,

“ And I have my buried Love in that far land :

“ I can not close this eye

“ In death—I’ll turn its glazing orb afar

“ Upon yon Star of hope, my worshiped Star !

“ Alas ! I’ve called in vain :

“ For now my tongue can form a pleading word

“ No more : and I must suffer here unheard,

“ In agonizing pain,

“ Like some poor tortured wretch, who is at last

“ Forth to the wild Hyena’s fury cast.

“ I hoped in childhood hours,

“ (Happiest hours !) that life would pass away

“ As pleasant as those merry months of May,

“ When playing ’mong the bowers

“ Of that bright Isle. But ah ! such scenes of mirth

“ Are never more to glad my heart on earth.

“ Since, I have toiled for years
“ Beneath a torrid-sun, until my brain
“ Seemed fired—and soul and sense was rent in twain,
“ Nor could suppress my tears,
“ As oft I thought that for some pampered knave,
“ Still must I ever serve, and die a slave.

“ And yet that land I loved :
“ For even now I can remember well
“ How oft o’er forest, meadow, wood and dell
“ In summer time I’ve roved
“ With her, whose form far in the forest lies,
“ But whose sweet spirit sings in other skies.

“ We used to talk of Heaven
“ Together. There I’ll meet that seraph pure ;
“ Of late I’ve dreamed of her, till I am sure
“ She will to me be given :
“ Were’t not for this sweet hope, so full of bliss,
“ I could not die in such a place as this.

“ I could no longer stay
“ When she, sweet solace of my soul, was gone.
“ Angel ! that smiled on Earth, and was withdrawn
“ To yon bright Heaven away.
“ And then I fled to seek some friendly shore,
“ Where whips and chains sho’d torture me no more.

“ But in my weary flight,
“ I’ve met abuse and sufferings untold :
“ And oh ! what dreary swamps and rivers cold
“ I’ve crossed at lone midnight ;
“ And when the morning sun arose, turned back
“ To drive the hungry bloodhounds from my track.

“ And oft at many a door
“ Have sought relief from such a fate forlorn
“ As this, but met with sneers and stripes and scorn,
“ Till I could bear no more.
“ Poor, wounded and forsaken, I must lie
“ Upon this snowy couch, to moan and die.

“ My eyes are blind with tears
“ All frozen by the blast. Oh ! how I’ve wept !
“ And wished my soul Oblivion had kept
“ Throughout eternal years,
“ Rather than suffer here. But ah ! no more
“ Will I lament—this life will soon be o’er.

“ Yes, I am dying now !
“ I feel a shivering round each vital part,
“ As if some icy hand had clutched my heart
“ And chilled my blood. My brow
“ Is cold ! my brain doth freeze ! my voice is dumb !
“ Dying, dying ! to thee, oh God ! I come !”

Why wail the night winds ? why on the blast
Do voices of weeping go shuddering past ?
Why went the wild moon to rest with a frown ?
Why looked the pale stars so sorrowful down ?
O ! where is the Captive ? Hath he found repose ?
Is he safe from the wrath of his vengeful foes ?

Has he ceased to fear? does he cease to roam?
In the land of Freedom has he found a home?

Alcar, the Hero, the Pilgrim is dead!
And spirits do weep o'er his lowly bed.
Oh! hark to the wind! how it dolefully grieves!
Like the blast that scatters the autumn leaves!
The fiends of the storm are shrieking so loud,
But they wake him not from his snowy shroud.
That form now sleeps with its native Earth,
But the peerless soul seeks a heavenly birth.

He hath found repose; he hath reached a goal
Where oppression no more may torture his soul;
A goal for the free, more secure than is found
In a world of crime—'tis on Heavenly ground!
Weep not for the Creole, but weep for the Slave,
As a Nation weeps for her fallen brave.
O! plead for the Slave, with as eloquent-tongue
As a mother pleads for her stolen young!

He is fettered in soul, and in heart and limb !
And no pitying voices will plead for him.
Oh ! plead for the Slave in his agony,
And a voice in Heaven shall plead for thee.

VI.

I love Columbia : my humble lays
Shall ever speak enchanting in her praise.
I love my country : 'twill be always dear
To me, for liberty still lingers here.
Driven from old decaying Greece and Rome,
She finds in bright Columbia a home.
I love my country ! but these iron times
Demand exposure of her many crimes.
Though her domain be boundless, yet to be
A happy home for man, it must be free.
It shall be free ! a principle so high,
So Godlike in its nature, can not die.
The glorious men whose deeds for freedom fill

The earth with their renown, are mighty still.
And she shall triumph yet ; though buffeted,
And bound and bleeding—yet she is not dead ;
And though her fanes be ashes, she shall rise
Great, Phoenix-like, and rule below the skies.
Fair freedom shall be worshiped, but no more
With beastly passion, as in days of yore ;
But for her purity, the bard shall bring
His praise ; her virtue shall the Poet sing.
Columbia shall usher in the glorious day,
When all the western world shall own her sway.

Old night is on the wane : the spectres fly,
And freedom's Sun comes proudly up the sky !
His warm benignant beams shall yet illumine
Chaotic Earth, and chase away its gloom.
Rejoice ! let every brave reformer hope ;
A power hath now arisen which shall cope
With tyranny, although it bring afield
As aid, satanic legions—it must yield.

Exult then, O Reformer! who hast toiled
Long weary years, though oft defamed and foiled—
The days of persecution soon are passed,
Triumphant liberty shall rule at last.
She rules already! she was the magic power
That reared this mighty nation in an hour.
See free-born millions go exultant forth,
To till the broad green valleys of the north.
Behold them rouse from life-reviving rest
To reap the prairies of the boundless west.
See unchained Commerce! Lo, her sails so free,
Flap every gale, and whiten every sea.
Religion, Art and Science ever sway
The mind of man, where freedom rules the day.
The South, beholding her benignant reign,
Shall welcome freedom to her fair domain,
Its happy influence on every hand
Shall banish bondage from that sunny land.

VII.

Cold was the morn, and drifted was the snow,
The murmuring of the rivalet was low :
The Earth was frozen in a snowy shroud,
Transparent was the heavens, without a cloud :
The winds had lost their fury—in the air
Floated the frost in crystals white and rare.
That wintry morn, before the sun arose
To charm the rigor from the frozen snows—
A cottager's young daughter, sweet and fair,
And beautiful as June's first roses are,
Early went forth to school ; and as she passed
The woodside where poor Alcar moaned his last—
Beheld the murdered Pilgrim by the drift :
Her heart was full of childlike pity ; swift
She bore the tidings to her father's cot,
Who with a stranger hastened to the spot :
They raised him up, they brushed the snow away,
When lo ! 'twas Alcar—dead before Corlay ;

Whose prayers at length were answered—but not so
He prayed to meet the noble slave, oh ! no.
But there the brothers met : sweet liberty
Was theirs together—both at last were free.

Fain would the truth-recording Muse relate
Of him who suffered thus, a happier fate :
Fain would she tell of years of happy hours,
Spent where no frowning despot ever lowers.
But oh ! for one by all save Heaven forgot,
Than death I ween there is no happier lot.
Corlay took up the Pilgrim's dear remains,
No more to shrink and writhe in torturing chains ;
They found a friendlier home, a kindlier care
Than they were wont in weary life to share.
His pity, love and friendship, all combined
To sink in sorrow his afflicted mind.
He wept as he had never wept before,
He mourned as once the Prophet mourned of yore,

Then to the ashes of his comrade gave
A christian burial, a friendly grave.

A quiet grave ! the thought is sweet to one
Whose weary wanderings are almost done.
'Tis sweet to think that when this throbbing heart
Is still, it may repose in tranquil rest.
'Tis sweet to know, to e'en the dying slave,
That friends will make for him a quiet grave.

The Creole sleeps forgotten. But his name
In future ages shall be wed to fame.
Then it shall prove a potent spell to cheer
The bondman in his conquering career.
Yes ! it shall live for aye, in treasured verse,
While tyrants' names—Oblivion shall curse.

Still, chains are on the millions : but a day
Must come—let sceptics scorn it as they may—

When banished Justice shall all potent rise,
With high commission from the holy skies ;
And sternly bid incarnate vengeance burst
In wrath, upon a Nation that has cursed
A harmless race with chains. But oh ! may Heaven
Avert the blow till every chain be riven.
The sons of Earth no more shall be in thrall,
But Freedom be the legacy of all.

THE END.



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